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**Workshop on the Improvement of Civil Registration and  
Vital Statistics in SADC Region  
1-5 December 2008  
Blantyre, Malawi**

**Report on the United Nations Workshop on the Improvement of Civil Registration and  
Vital Statistics in SADC Region\***

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## Table of Contents

I. Introduction .....	4
A. Background and objective of the meeting.....	4
B. Participation .....	4
C. Opening session.....	4
Malawi National Statistics Office.....	4
SADC.....	4
UNSD.....	5
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Malawi .....	5
D. Organisation of the workshop.....	5
II. Summary of presentations and discussions.....	6
Session 3. Vital statistics and their sources .....	6
Session 4. The need for a civil registration system.....	8
Session 5. Civil registration system and its use for vital statistics.....	9
Session 6. Integration and coordination in the civil registration system .....	11
Session 7. Cause-of-death data collection through the civil registration system.....	12
Session 8. Evaluating the completeness of the civil registration system.....	13
Session 9. Civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries.....	14
Botswana.....	14
Lesotho.....	16
Madagascar .....	17
Malawi .....	19
Mauritius .....	20
Mozambique .....	21
Namibia.....	23
South Africa.....	24
Swaziland.....	27
Tanzania - Zanzibar .....	28
Zambia .....	29
Zimbabwe .....	31
Session 10. Compilation of vital statistics at international level .....	32
Session 11. Provider's presentation .....	33
Session 12a. Group discussion topic 1 - Training and public education .....	33
Session 12b. Group discussion topic 2 – Model civil registration law .....	36
Session 13. Visit to the Malawi Department of Registrar General.....	37
Session 14. Overview of the SADC Statistics work programme.....	38
III. Conclusions and recommendations.....	39
General.....	39
Civil registration .....	40
Vital statistics.....	41
International standards.....	42
Coordination .....	42
Compilation of vital statistics at international level .....	43
Improvement of data on cause of death .....	43
Annex 1. List of participants.....	45
Annex 2. Organisation of work.....	49

Annex 3. Pre-workshop assignments for civil registrars .....	53
Pre-workshop assignment 1 – Review and assessment of the national civil registration system .....	53
Pre-workshop assignment 2 .....	59
Annex 4. Pre-workshop assignments for statisticians.....	60
Pre-workshop assignment 1 - Review of sources and methods for vital statistics ...	60
Pre-workshop assignment 2 .....	72

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Background and objective of the meeting**

1. The United Nations Workshop on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in SADC Region was held 1-5 December 2008, in Blantyre, Malawi. It was jointly organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
2. The main purposes of the workshop were to (a) provide guidance to countries on the implementation of the United Nations recommendations for the collection and compilation of vital statistics at national level through civil registration system; (b) assess the current status of the civil registration and vital statistics systems in SADC countries and identify strategies for the improvement of the civil registration system; and (c) examine the availability of data that countries are able to provide to UNSD through the *Demographic Yearbook* data collection and look for ways for further improvement.
3. This report summarizes the presentations and discussions made during the workshop; documents countries' experiences in the collection and compilation of vital statistics and highlights the major conclusions and recommendations for the improvement of the civil registration and vital statistics systems in the region.

### **B. Participation**

4. Twelve countries in the SADC region were represented in the workshop – Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania – Zanzibar, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Participants included those from National Statistical Offices who have experience with the collection and compilation of vital statistics and those from the Ministry of Home Affairs or Ministry of Justice who are responsible for and/or familiar with the registration process of vital events in their respective countries. The list of participants is included in Annex 1.

### **C. Opening session**

#### *Malawi National Statistics Office*

5. Mr. Charles Machinjili from the National Statistics Office of Malawi welcomed the participants to the workshop and he introduced the objectives of the workshop and stated that the workshop was important to Malawi to improve its civil registration and vital statistics system.

#### *SADC*

6. Mr. Ackim Jere welcomed everybody to the workshop and expressed appreciation to UNSD for organizing the workshop and to the National Statistics Office of Malawi for hosting the workshop and for its administrative support.

7. Mr. Jere briefed the participants on the objectives of the SADC Development Account Project at improving the statistical capacity of countries in the region, as well as their ability to produce data for the Millennium Development Goals. He noted that a number of workshops had been conducted under the Project and a several more were being planned. He also informed the participants of a number of other statistical projects that were underway in the SADC region, in the area of trade, international comparison programme, and population censuses.

8. In order to improve the civil registration and vital statistics systems in SADC region, Mr. Jere proposed the following measures: (1) developing a regional programme on the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics and (2) creating a forum to harmonize vital statistics in the region.

### ***UNSD***

9. On behalf of Dr. Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Mr. Srdjan Mrkic welcomed the participants to the workshop. He outlined that the main objective of this workshop was to bring more understanding to the countries on the United Nations guidelines and standards on civil registration and vital statistics. The workshop would also assess the current status of national capacities in compiling vital statistics and the sources for vital statistics. In addition, the workshop would provide a platform for SADC countries to learn from each other. Mr. Mrkic expected that the workshop would stimulate fruitful discussions and also generate useful recommendations. Mr. Mrkic also expressed UNSD's appreciation to the National Statistics Office of Malawi for its hospitality.

### ***Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Malawi***

10. Mr. Roy Chizimba, the Deputy Minister of the Economic Planning and Development of Malawi, welcomed UNSD, SADC and participants from the other SADC countries. He stressed the importance of the workshop, given the fact that Malawi was in the process of revising the civil registration law and revitalizing its civil registration system. He emphasized the importance of vital statistics for planning and evaluating government programmes and underlined the difficulties in implementing a functioning civil registration system.

## **D. Organisation of the workshop**

11. The full and annotated agenda of the workshop is included in Annex 2. The abridged version is shown below:

1. Registration of participants
2. Opening
3. Vital statistics and their sources
4. The need for a civil registration system
5. Civil registration and its use for vital statistics
6. Integration and coordination in the civil registration system
7. Cause-of-death data collection through civil registration system

8. Evaluating the completeness of the civil registration system
9. Civil registration and vital statistics in SADC countries
10. Compilation of vital statistics at international level
11. Provider's presentation
- 12a. Group discussion topic 1: training and public education
- 12b. Group discussion topic 2: model civil registration law
- 12c. Report from the group discussions - sessions 12a and 12b
13. Visit to the Malawi Department of Registrar General
14. Overview of the SADC Statistics work programme
15. Conclusions and recommendations

12. Most of the sessions, except sessions 12a and 12b, were plenary with presentations followed by floor discussions that provided the participants with a forum for debates, sharing of experiences and exchange of views. Session 12a and 12b were group discussions. Session 12c presented the results of the group discussions in plenary.

The workshop sessions were chaired by Mr. Mercy Kanyuka (Malawi), Ms. Pauline Niita Enkono (Namibia), Mr. Bakar Hamad (Tanzania), Mr. Ackim Jere (SADC), Ms. Cornelia Neo LEPANG (Botswana) and Mr. Srdjan Mrkic (UNSD). The Rapporteur for the workshop was Mr. Roopnarain Bundhoo (Mauritius), and the rapporteurs for the group discussions were Mr. Tinashe Enock MWADIWA (Zimbabwe) and Ms. Maletela TUOANE-NKHASI (South Africa).

## **II. Summary of presentations and discussions**

### **Session 3. Vital statistics and their sources**

13. A representative of the United Nations Statistics Division introduced three main data sources of vital statistics – civil registration, population census and sample surveys. The presentation highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of each source and emphasized that civil registration was the best source for coherent, reliable and accountable vital statistics.

14. The civil registration system, when complete, represents the most adequate source for vital statistics as it is universal, constantly updated, and can be modeled to provide details on causes of death. However, the information is often not processed for the smallest geographical unit and it is not self sufficient for the calculation of rates as it needs other data sources for the estimates of the population at risk.

15. Censuses have their advantages and disadvantages when used for fertility and mortality statistics. A well-documented advantage refers to the fact that they provide statistics for small areas, they are self-sufficient for the calculation of rates and they are universal. On the other hand, they are undoubtedly the most expensive statistical exercises and too far apart in time. When analyzing in depth the appropriateness of the census for fertility and mortality statistics it is recognized that the processing of results is slow and expensive and that there is a danger that data become obsolete by the time they are published. Another consideration when using censuses refers to the framing of census

questions relating to fertility and mortality, as they pertain not to the census date itself, but to a period of time preceding the census (for example, the number of children born to the woman in the 12 months prior to the census date).

16. As far as sample surveys are concerned, their quality is often affected by sampling and non-sampling errors and they are not suitable for small area statistics. On the other hand, they provide a much broader range of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, as they allow for detailed questioning.

17. The second part of the presentation summarized the findings from replies to the pre-workshop assignments (Annex 3 and Annex 4) that were sent to countries on data sources for vital statistics<sup>1</sup>. On the pre-workshop assignments, participants were asked to provide information on major sources of vital statistics in their respective countries and the coverage of the civil registration system.

18. The findings indicated that most countries in the region used mainly population censuses and sample surveys as sources of vital statistics, with the exception of Mauritius and South Africa. In terms of the completeness of civil registration, only one participating country – Mauritius – has complete registration of births and deaths (above 90% - very close to the full coverage). Most participating countries indicated that their civil registration systems were not functioning well and the coverage of the system was either unknown or low.

19. The second part of the presentation reviewed the core and additional topics on fertility and mortality recommended by the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 2*. The presentation also analyzed the degree to which SADC member countries have covered those topics in their 2000 round of population censuses. Eleven out of the 14 countries in the region conducted a census between 1995 and 2004 and most of the censuses have good coverage of fertility and mortality questions. Three countries in the region – Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Madagascar – did not conduct census in that same period. The presentation concluded by pointing out the lessons learned from the past for the 2010 round of population censuses, such as taking full advantage of the 2010 round censuses to obtain basic fertility and mortality statistics; asking the right questions and compiling the data; and using census data to evaluate the civil registration system in the country.

20. During the discussion, a question was asked on how to link the civil registration authority and the statistical office for vital statistics purposes. It was noted that there were different ways of passing the registration information. The Civil Registrar in Mauritius fills out the registration and statistical form while registering vital events and sends the statistical form to the National Statistics Office so vital statistics can be compiled later. In South Africa, registered records of births and marriages are processed in the Registrar and then sent to the Statistics South Africa for dissemination, while for statistics on deaths, original death records are provided to the Statistics South Africa and

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<sup>1</sup> These will be presented in detail in a forthcoming Technical Report. Brief summary of findings is presented under Session 9 of this report (page 14).

the deaths data processing and dissemination are both completed by the Statistics South Africa.

21. A concern was raised regarding the possible contradictions between the laws on civil registration and vital statistics, since both laws might cover the part on the processing and compilation of vital statistics. One example was provided on how Statistics South Africa could not disclose personal identification numbers while sharing vital statistics with the Ministry of Health because of the restrictions specified in the Statistics Act regarding confidentiality of individual records. This prevented the Ministry of Health from conducting necessary analysis for active health intervention. However, as was pointed out by UNSD, this is not really a case of a contradiction, as there is no conflict between the two legal texts – the law on registration and the statistical act - but rather a very restrictive provision in the law on civil registration that might be revisited as new circumstances and demands arise. It was emphasized that the laws on civil registration and vital statistics should complement and not contradict each other.

22. A question was also asked on how to use a population census to evaluate the quality of vital statistics obtained from civil registration. It was responded by the UNSD representative that more details regarding evaluation the completeness of a civil registration system will be covered in later sessions. However, an example was provided – the number of children born in the last 12 months collected in a population census can and should be compared to the live births registration in the last 12 months prior to the census whenever available.

#### **Session 4. The need for a civil registration system**

23. A representative of UNSD made a presentation on the need for a civil registration system, which consisted of two parts. The first part elaborated on the definition and essential features of a civil registration system. The four basic characteristics of a civil registration – universal, continuous, permanent and compulsory were elaborated. It was also noted that civil registration had to be operated by a state-run public institution and that the registration functions included recording vital events; storing, safe-keeping and retrieval of vital records; protection of confidentiality; certificate issuing and other customer services; recording and reporting information on vital events for statistical purposes; and providing reliable and timely information and data to other government agencies.

24. The second part of the presentation outlined the importance of a properly functioning civil registration system and its impact on exercising basic human rights. A civil registration is needed to safeguard individual rights to social status and benefits. The system establishes identity, parental relationship, inheritance and citizenship, and provides eligibility data for social benefits and age-related items, such as school entry, the right to work and driver's license, not to mention the right to vote. Total registration also has an administrative advantage for monitoring cause of death; and is able to identify individual needs, such as maternal and child health care.

25. During the discussion the participants acknowledged the importance of the civil registration system and emphasized that all components of the system are equally



important for a well-functioning system. For instance, a well-defined civil registration law is crucial for a successfully implemented system but the enforcement of the law through various programmes and measures is also indispensable. Examples from Botswana, Namibia and Zambia illustrated the importance of enforcement of the law.

26. In Botswana, although the law requires that all births are to be reported by parents or witnesses of the birth (in the absence of parents) within 30 days, there are still a significant numbers of unregistered cases in the country (around 50% are not registered). Serious under-registration occurs to areas at the western border of Botswana (next to Namibia) where a large proportion of the population living there are nomads. Visits to the area by the registration office helps improving the registration coverage to a certain degree but more efforts are still necessary.

27. In Namibia, the registration of births and deaths is also compulsory by law. However, due to historical reason such as non-compulsory registration of indigenous people before 1990, vital events are still under-registered. Since 1990 when compulsory registration for everybody took effect, the registration office has taken various measures to improve the registration rate. For example, more district offices are put into place (18 currently), 13 buses carrying all necessary equipments have been used to travel around and register people living in remote areas, and policy has been implemented such as the requirement of ID for school enrollment and hospital services. All these measures have helped in improving the registration coverage (around 70% for births according to the 2001 Namibia census). However, there is still a 30% under-coverage partly due to non-enforcement of the civil registration law. Delaying registration until it is absolutely necessary is also a problem in the country.

28. In Zambia, the coverage of birth registration is only 10% while the registration has been compulsory since 1973. Majority of the population do not recognize the importance of registration and registration is done only when it is required for other services such as enrolling in school or traveling abroad. In most rural areas, there is no need to register for any service. A survey was conducted in Zambia early 2008 on the coverage of the civil registration system and the survey assessed reasons why people were not registering. The results suggested that most of the people in Zambia did not think it was necessary to register either the birth or death.

29. One success example in improving birth and death registration coverage was provided by South Africa. The country introduced the child support grant to be provided to registered live births. Mobile facilities such as buses also drive around to register those who cannot access registration offices easily. The birth and death registration rates improved significantly over the years. For example, the birth registration rate improved from 53% in 2000 to 81% in 2007. There are also more on-time registrations than before.

## **Session 5. Civil registration system and its use for vital statistics**

30. A representative of UNSD made a presentation on the basic characteristics of the civil registration method and the definitions of the vital events that needed to be registered in the civil registration system. These include five vital events with high priority according to the UN recommendations - live births, foetal deaths, deaths, marriages and divorces.

Definitions for other vital events such as annulments, judicial separation, adoption, legitimation and recognition were also briefly discussed.

31. The presentation emphasized on the three crucial functions – legal, administrative and statistical – of a civil registration system. The legal function of a civil registration system refers to the fact that vital records are the legal proof of the occurrence of the event. For example, a civil registration system provides essential legal documents on name, the date and place of a birth. Vital records can also be used to assist other agencies to accomplish administrative purposes. For example, vital records can be used to assess the accuracy of age, to implement and evaluate social and public health programmes and also to be used in a population register. Lastly, a civil registration system is a best source for continuous statistics given the universal coverage of registration. In addition, statistics derived from a civil registration system is not subject to memory lapses and sampling errors.

32. It was elaborated on how birth and deaths statistics could be derived from a civil registration system and what items are recommended to be collected in the statistical report for live births and deaths. The presentation also emphasized on a number of points when calculating vital rates based on civil registration data. Those include (a) adopting the same definitions in civil registration and in censuses and surveys since civil registration data are numerators and censuses and surveys are usually used for denominators when calculating rates; (b) tabulating vital events by place of usual residence and (c) reconciling the time reference between civil registration and other sources used for the denominator.

33. The first issue raised during the discussion was related to the following core items to be collected on the statistical form of birth registration – age of father and date of marriage of mother. Participants noted that the information that can be collected on father could be so little that it was not possible to conduct any meaningful analysis. There was also confusion why the date of marriage of mother would matter in estimating fertility level.

34. It was responded by q UNSD representative that those two items were important for societies or countries that were under particular settings. For example, in societies where polygamy is lawful the age of father has certain impact on fertility levels. While in a country that most births are in wedlock, duration-specific marital fertility rate is an important indicator of fertility level. The UNSD representative, however, pointed out that the relative importance of those two items needed to be revisited at the next revision of the international standards.

35. Another issue that came out of the discussion was on the registration of out-of-wedlock children. A question was raised on how out-of-wedlock children should be registered and how their surnames should be determined. In Mauritius those children are registered with the last name of their mothers and the name can be changed later with mother's consent. In Zanzibar, out-of-wedlock children are given a common name and it means "father missing" in Arabic. The participants were later reminded by a representative from UNSD that based on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, *a child should be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right*

*from birth to a name; and States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind.* Hence the fact that a child is born out-of-wedlock should not affect the registration of the child and the registration should not be discriminatory. In addition, the registration of a child should be separated from the establishment of fatherhood all together.

## **Session 6. Integration and coordination in the civil registration system**

36. A presentation was made by UNSD on the coordination necessary among parts of the civil registration and vital statistics systems. It was pointed out in the presentation that the need for coordination within the civil registration system existed irrespective of the organization of the system. Whether civil registration is centralized or decentralized and whether civil registration and vital statistics are in the same or different agencies, the need for coordination of the system is of paramount importance.

37. The coordination activities exist in three aspects. First, there should be a uniform legislation and regulation nationwide and procedures for each registration function is clearly stated in a manual and disseminated at each level. Second, there is a need to create an inter-agency coordinating committee, consisting of all reporting sources such as hospitals, private doctors, court houses, and funeral directors, to monitor and evaluate the completeness and reliability of the registration procedure. Another committee could be formed involving users and potential users of the civil registration records so that the demand for civil registration is strengthened. The third aspect is to maintain regular communications within the system, through periodic meetings, electronic dialogues and site visits. These activities also apply to the coordination within the system of vital statistics and between the systems of civil registration and vital statistics.

38. The participants echoed the importance of coordination for reliable civil registration and vital statistics system within a country. Working closely with the Ministry of Health, for example, is crucial for accurate coding of cause of deaths. Both Mauritius and South Africa have such coordination mechanism with the Ministry of Health. Namibia is currently working on a project to automating the procedure of civil registration and a committee was formed to gather inputs from all stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Electoral Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics, Office of Prime Minister and Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. When the project is completed, all stakeholders and users of the civil registration information shall be able to access the information electronically.

39. The importance of coordination mechanisms among all levels within a country was also emphasized in the discussion. Statistics South Africa pointed out that there were coordination committees established at provincial level and the committees involved Department of Health, Statistics South Africa, Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Home Affairs (in charge of civil registration). The committees were created to facilitate the flow of vital statistics.

40. A participant from UNSD shared the experience of Argentina with the participants, while a committee was created to coordinate the activities of the civil registrar, national

statistical office and the representative of the President. The coordination went rather well. He also emphasized that involving the media for the dissemination of statistical information was crucial for the general public to acknowledge the importance of registering vital events.

41. The participants also discussed the possibility of having a regional coordinating body or an association on civil registration and vital statistics, suggested by representative from UNSD. The association would be very important for experience sharing and communicating on relevant issues among countries in the region. There was a similar association created for the Caribbean countries and has been working very well. The representative from SADC echoed the suggestion and noted that there were committees within SADC region working on different areas of statistics and for each area, one country in the region was leading the committee. Hence, similar model could be used for the committee on civil registration and vital statistics.

### **Session 7. Cause-of-death data collection through the civil registration system**

42. Dr. Debbi Bradshaw from the Medical Research Council of South Africa shared her experiences in working with the cause-of-death statistics. The presentation consisted of three parts. The first part used the cause-of-death data from Cape Town to illustrate how these statistics was used to assess the geographic and temporal variations in mortality rates. Cause-of-death data were also used to identify the leading causes of deaths, which was useful for government to make interventions on certain public health concerns, to allocate health budget and to deliver necessary services to people who need them.

43. The second part of the presentation provided guidance on how to produce cause-of-death statistics and how to identify the underlying cause of death. Examples were provided to help the participants understand better the differences among different types of causes.

44. At the end of her presentation, Dr. Bradshaw emphasized that the quality assurance of cause of death statistics needed to be done at various stages – diagnosis, certification, coding, classification and analysis – while working with the data. Examples were given to illustrate how errors have occurred and identified.

45. During the discussion, a representative from UNSD informed the participants about the Automated Classification of Medical Entities (ACME) that could be used to identify the underlying cause of death from coded causes. The software works well in Germany and Nordic countries and is currently being tested in the United States of America and Australia. From the experience of South Africa, 80% of underlying causes are usually identified correctly using ACME while 20% need some expertise to review manually. The ideal situation is to set up a system so that the National Statistical Office can always go back to the doctors for further clarification. It was further emphasized by Dr. Bradshaw that evaluation was crucial at all stages of cause of deaths data collection and compilation, despite of the methods that countries use for coding and for identifying the underlying cause of deaths.

46. There was a discussion regarding the use of abbreviations by medical doctors on death certificates. In principle it is always better not to use any abbreviations to avoid confusion. However it was noted by the representative from South Africa that abbreviations were used in the country and in order to avoid any confusion, a list of standard abbreviations was provided to the medical doctors and the list was being updated constantly.

47. It was recognized by the participants that the training of both medical professionals and statisticians was very important in obtaining accurate information on cause-of-death statistics. It was felt that a lot of training activities had been conducted for doctors but not enough for statisticians. In fact as Dr. Bradshaw noted, statisticians were capable of coding cause-of-death after certain training. For example, Statistics South Africa conducts regular refreshing courses on cause of deaths coding to its staff and this mechanism has been working well in the country.

48. The participants also discussed ways to register deaths occurred outside of the health institutions. For example, the involvement of headman in the registration process definitely helps with the registration rate, as indicated by Namibia and South Africa. While for filling out cause of death information, one way is to use verbal autopsy and the other way is to have the local headman completed a different form and put in as much information as possible provided by the family members. It was then emphasized by a representative from UNSD that the law on civil registration should specify the procedure for registration of deaths occurring outside medical institutions.

## **Session 8. Evaluating the completeness of the civil registration system**

49. A representative of UNSD presented methods for detecting deficiencies problems in registering vital events. To maintain the goal of universal coverage, central and sub-national registration offices need to establish regular protocols to assure that all local registration areas are properly performing registration functions. The protocols should also examine other quantitative and qualitative aspects of the registration of vital events. In addition to internal management and surveillance protocols, objective assessments by external authorities are also recommended. The presentation examined both direct and indirect methods in assessing the civil registration system in detail.

50. The direct method for evaluating the completeness of civil registration involves the direct matching of civil registration records with those from an independent source. Several independent sources – civil registration records (for an independent vital event), administrative and social records, population census and sample survey records, and dual record system – may be used for making a direct evaluation. A direct method can provide useful information on the sources of under-reporting, particularly if the test is carefully designed and can also improve registration by identifying unregistered vital events. Indirect assessments indicate whether a data quality problem exists. The following methods were described: comparison of trends, delayed registration, comparison with census data and comparison of rates.

51. During the discussion, a concern was raised regarding the quality of the independent data source used in the direct method and its impact on the results of the direct method. For example, the quality of a population census could affect the coverage estimate – under-reported births in the census would overestimate the completeness of the birth registration. Similarly while matching the birth and death registration record, incomplete birth registration could also overestimate the completeness of the death registration. In fact, it is rather common in the SADC countries that deaths occurred to children are not registered if their births were not registered – resulting in the under-coverage of both birth and death registration.

52. Another question raised was on the key variable to be used for matching records. In some countries unique identification number is not available for matching, for example, births occurred to foreigners living in South Africa are not included in the population register and therefore there is no unique ID assigned. In this case, one has to resort to using names instead of the ID number.

## **Session 9. Civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries**

### ***Botswana***

#### Vital statistics

53. The vital statistics system in Botswana is centralized and it is administered by the Central Statistics Office, under the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. Vital statistics in Botswana are obtained from three sources – population census, inter-censal demographic surveys and civil registration (partially).

54. The latest population census was conducted in 2001 and the fertility and mortality questions included children ever born and living, births occurred in the last two years and survival of the children, as well as household deaths in the last two years. The following fertility and mortality estimates were obtained through the population census: crude birth rate, general fertility rate, total fertility rate, crude death rate, infant and child mortality rate and under 5 mortality rate. The census results were published in 2002.

55. An inter-censal demographic survey was conducted in 2006 by the Central Statistics Office of Botswana. The survey used a stratified two-stage probability sample design and interviewed 11760 households (2.9% sample) covering the entire country. The following fertility and mortality questions were included: children ever born alive and living, last live birth and the survival of the birth, births in the last 12 months and survival, household deaths in the last 12 months and basic characteristics of the deceased (including a question on cause of death). The following fertility and mortality estimates were obtained from the survey: crude birth rate, general fertility rate, total fertility rate, crude death rate, infant and child mortality rate and under 5 mortality rate. The survey report was published in January 2009.

56. The Central Statistics Office also obtains vital statistics from the Department of Civil and National Registration (under the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs). Both offices

- the Central Statistics Office<sup>2</sup> and the Department of Civil and National Registration – publish statistics on registered births, deaths and marriages. Divorces are registered by court offices (under the High Court of Botswana) and are not linked to the Department of Civil and National Registration. No statistics is generated on the registered divorces in the country.

57. Vital statistics obtained from the census and surveys are coherent but statistics from civil registration is not consistent with data obtained from the other two data sources. This is mainly because of the under-coverage of the civil registration system in Botswana.

### Civil registration

58. The civil registration system is centralized and administered by the Department of Civil and National Registration (under the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs). Births, foetal deaths and deaths are registered either at the hospital or municipal offices. The registration of births and deaths is computerized and the registration records are transferred from the local to the central office electronically. Marriages are registered manually at the municipal offices and divorces are registered at court offices. However only marriage registration records are sent to the central office for processing.

59. The civil registration system in Botswana has not been evaluated by either the civil registrar or the Statistics Office in the past ten years. UNICEF estimated that the birth coverage was about 58% for the period of 1995 – 2000<sup>3</sup>. There is no estimate on how complete the death registration is, however it is believed that the coverage of death registration is lower than of birth registration.

### Difficulties and future plans:

60. There are two main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Botswana. First, the civil registration coverage is low. There are a number of reasons for the low coverage: (1) civil registration became compulsory only since 1998 and there is a lack of awareness of the public on the importance of the registration – sometimes birth is only registered when the child is going to school and death is registered only when the relatives need to file a claim at an insurance company; (2) birth registration is not required to access public services such as health care and primary school education and therefore there is no incentives to register; (3) births and deaths occurred outside of the health institutions are difficult to capture; (4) traditional marriages that are processed by the village chief/kgosi are not captured by the civil registration system; (5) there are difficulties for remote area dwellers to access the registration facilities, some of the remote areas can only be reached by boat or air; and (6) human resource limitations also hampers the registration of vital events.

61. The second issue relates in particular to the production of vital statistics – there is a lack of coordination between the Central Statistics Office and the Department of Civil

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<sup>2</sup> Registered births, deaths and marriages are published annually in the *Population Report* by the Central Statistics Office

<sup>3</sup> Birth registration coverage was estimated through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000.

and National Registration. For example, even though the two agencies share information electronically, the database platform that the civil registrar uses (ORACLE-based) and the analysis software that the Statistics Office uses (SPSS) can not be easily adapted to each other. Another example of lack of coordination is that the civil registration districts and the census districts are defined differently and hence make it difficult to compile vital rates when the denominator is population obtained from population censuses.

62. The Department of Civil and National Registration plans to intensify the public campaign to improve the public awareness in the importance of civil registration. Collaboration with UNICEF on the improvement of birth registration is also underway.

## ***Lesotho***

### Vital statistics

63. The Bureau of Statistics (under Ministry of Finance and Development Planning) is responsible for collecting, compiling, analyzing and disseminating vital statistics in Lesotho. The main sources of vital statistics in Lesotho are population censuses and sample surveys. The latest population census was conducted in 2006 and questions were asked on age at first marriage, survival of birth parents, children ever born and living, births occurred in the last 12 months and survival of the children and survival of sisters. About twenty questions were asked in the census on fertility and mortality.

64. An inter-censal demographic survey was conducted in 2001 by the Bureau of Statistics and fertility and mortality questions asked in the survey were similar to those in the 2006 census questionnaire. The survey used the stratified two-stage probability sample design and interviewed around 16000 households (4% sample based on the total number of households in the 1996 census) covering the entire country. The following fertility and mortality estimates were obtained through the survey: crude birth rate, general fertility rate, total fertility rate, crude death rate, infant and child mortality rate, under 5 mortality rate and maternal mortality. The survey results were published in 2002.

65. The Bureau of Statistics also has the mandate to produce birth and death statistics collected from the civil registration system in the country. The Bureau of Statistics receives copies of the registration forms from the District Administrator's Office (under the Registrar of Births and Deaths' Office) for data processing. The collection of forms on marriages and divorces from the District Administrator's Office started recently. It was considered by the Bureau of Statistics that vital statistics generated from the civil registration system cannot be used for planning purposes due to its low coverage.

66. Vital statistics obtained from the census and survey is coherent but statistics from civil registration is not consistent with the other two data sources. This is mainly because of the under-coverage of the civil registration system in Lesotho.

### Civil registration

67. The civil registration system in Lesotho is decentralized. The system operates at district level (10 districts in the country) and the work is coordinated by the Office of



Registrar of Births and Deaths and the Office of Registrar of Marriages (under the Ministry of Local Government). Registration forms are completed in triplicate by the Chiefs in the village. The forms are then sent to the District Administrator's in individual district for authorization, production and issuance of certificates.

68. The civil registration system in Lesotho has very low coverage and the most recent assessment of birth registration coverage was estimated to be 29.3%<sup>4</sup>.

#### Difficulties and future plans:

69. There are three main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Lesotho. First, the civil registration coverage is low. There are a number of reasons for the low coverage: (1) although the civil registration offices became decentralized since 2000, accessibility of the service is still a challenge for people living in certain areas; (2) the transmission of completed registration forms from the village chief to district office is very slow and some forms only reach the District Administrator's Office when the Chief happens to visit the office; (3) there is a lack of awareness of the public on the importance of civil registration; and (4) there is not enough resource to carry out the civil registration function.

70. The second issue relates to the quality of registration forms. The forms are usually not properly completed and many important fields on the form are often missing.

71. The third issue is connected in particular to the production of vital statistics. There is no legal obligation on transferring registration forms from the District Administrator's Office to the Bureau of Statistics – forms are only brought in for statistical processing when the civil registrar happens to visit the Bureau of Statistics. In terms of data processing, the Information Technology Production and Dissemination Division within the Bureau of Statistics is currently dealing with all data processing tasks within the Bureau and vital statistics most of the times cannot be processed on time due to other competing priorities.

72. To improve the coverage and reporting of vital statistics, Lesotho plans to (1) conduct advocacy campaigns to raise the public awareness on the importance of civil registration; (2) work with key stakeholders such as Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and develop a strategy to improving the reporting of vital events; (3) provide trainings to staff working in the Vital Statistics Section in the Bureau of Statistics so the processing of vital statistics does not have to depend solely on the Information Technology Production and Dissemination Division; (4) start analyzing the data on marriages and divorces; and (5) publish report on vital statistics annually.

### ***Madagascar***

#### Vital statistics

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<sup>4</sup> The assessment was based on the 2004 Demographic and Health Survey

73. The Institut National de la Statistique of Madagascar is responsible for producing vital statistics, out of the only two sources - Population census and sample surveys. There is no statistics produced from the civil registration system. The latest population census was conducted in 1993 and questions on children ever born and children living were included. The last two Demographic and Health Surveys (1997 and 2003/04) were used for fertility and mortality estimates.

#### Civil registration

74. The civil registration system in Madagascar is a centralized system and is related to two different ministries – the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice. Both Ministries supervise the daily work of civil registration, which is undertaken by the Mayor (in Town Council) in municipal offices for births, deaths and marriages. Divorces are registered in court offices. Ministry of Justice is also responsible for collecting registered vital records from the municipality level and compiling vital statistics.

75. Births and deaths occurred in the hospital can also be registered by secondary registration units located in hospitals. For delayed births and deaths registration at the Mayor's office (12 days after the occurrence), the registration record in the hospital can be used to justify the occurrence of the event.

76. There is no recent assessment carried out by the agencies in the country on the completeness of the civil registration system. However it is known that civil registration is not covered in some rural and remote areas. Births occurred to homeless people in large cities are not covered either. Based on the 2000 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in Madagascar, the coverage of under-5 birth registration varies from around 94% in the capital city, to 80% in urban areas and 70% in rural areas.

#### Difficulties and future plans:

77. The civil registration system in Madagascar does not cover everybody in the country, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Vital events occurred in rural and remote areas are not registered due to various reasons: (1) it is difficult to reach the registration office given the short period of time allowed for registration (12 days after the occurrence of the vital event); (2) births assisted by traditional birth attendants usually do not get registered because the traditional birth attendants are not recognized by the State; and (3) most of the rural population are illiterate and are not aware of the fact that they need to register.

78. The factor that hampers the production of vital statistics from the civil registration system in Madagascar is that currently the linkage between the civil registrars and the office compiling vital statistics does not exist. According to the law, registrars at municipal level should provide the registration records to the Ministry of Justice every five years. However this practice is not carried out at this moment due to resource constraints. Statistical tabulations generated in local civil registration offices, as well as those generated at higher levels are not provided to the Institut National de la Statistique of Madagascar either.

79. Since 2004, the government of Madagascar, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNDP, has established a programme to revitalize the birth registration in the country. The following activities are planned: (1) establishing a local committee to monitor the birth registration; (2) revising the civil registration law to extend the time allowed for birth registration from 12 to 45 days and to include special provisions for the registration of births occurred in remote areas; (3) implementing programmes to raise the awareness of citizens on the registration of vital events; and (4) providing trainings to civil registrars on the importance of civil registration.

## ***Malawi***

### Vital statistics

80. The vital statistics system in Malawi is centralized and the National Statistics Office is the responsible agency. The main sources of vital statistics in Malawi are population censuses and sample surveys. The latest population census was conducted in 2008 and questions on fertility and mortality included the age of first marriage, children ever born and living, births occurred in the last 12 months and survival of the children, survival of sisters and household deaths occurred in the last 12 months.

81. The last two sample surveys related to the estimates of fertility and mortality are the 2004 Demographic and Health Survey and the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, respectively. The 2004 survey interviewed around 15000 household and the 2006 survey interviewed 31000 households. The following fertility and mortality estimates were obtained through the two surveys: crude birth rate, total fertility rate, crude death rate, infant mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate, under 5 mortality rate and maternal mortality. The survey results were published in 2006 and 2008, respectively.

### Civil registration

82. The civil registration system in Malawi is not compulsory and is operated manually. No statistics is compiled from the system and there is no evaluation on the completeness of the system. The registration function is currently carried out by the Department of Registrar General (under the Ministry of Justice). Because of the non-compulsory nature, most people choose to register only when necessary, such as applying for a passport before traveling abroad.

83. A new agency – the National Registration Bureau (under the Office of the President and Cabinet) – was established in 2005 to build a population registration system. The Bureau will take over the work of civil registration once all the preparatory work is completed. The Bureau is currently working on drafting the new civil registration law.

### Difficulties and future plans

84. The most challenging issue related to the civil registration system is its non-compulsory nature. Although the new law will make the registration compulsory, it will still take a long period for the public to follow the requirement.

85. Another challenge is to establish a functioning protocol for the transfer of registration information from the registration agency to the National Statistics Office.

## ***Mauritius***

### Vital statistics

86. The vital statistics system in Mauritius is centralized and the Central Statistics Office (CSO, under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment) is the responsible agency. The main source of vital statistics in the country is the civil registration system. Population census is also used to collect information on fertility and nuptiality.

87. The civil registration system collects information on live births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages and divorces: live births, stillbirths, deaths and marriages are registered by the Central Civil Status Office (under the Prime Minister's Office) and divorces are registered by the Judicial Department (also named Supreme Court of Mauritius). Electronic registration records are transmitted from the Central Civil Status Office to CSO for coding and dissemination. For divorce statistics, summary reports are provided to CSO for dissemination.

88. Vital statistics are published annually on *Digest of Demographic Statistics*<sup>5</sup> and data on live births, stillbirths, deaths and marriages are also published semi-annually on *Population and Vital Statistics*<sup>6</sup>.

89. The latest population census was conducted in 2000 and questions on fertility included age at first marriage and children ever born. The census results on fertility and nuptiality were published in 2005.

### Civil registration

90. The civil registration system in Mauritius is centralized and administered by two agencies – live births, stillbirths, deaths and marriages are registered by the Central Civil Status Office and divorces are registered by the Judicial Department. According to the legal requirement, live births are to be registered within 45 days and stillbirths and deaths are to be registered within 24 hours from the occurrence of the events.

91. There is no assessment on the coverage of the civil registration system in the last 10 years. Earlier assessments were conducted by comparing data from the civil registration system with population censuses conducted in 1952, 1962 and 1972 and concluded that registration of births and deaths were complete (well above 90%). The registration of marriages is considered not complete because the system only registers the civil marriages but not the religious marriages.

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<sup>5</sup> The latest issue is *Digest of Demographic Statistics 2007*, available online at <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/cso/report/natacc/demo07/toc.htm>

<sup>6</sup> The latest issue is *Population and Vital Statistics – Year 2008*, available online at <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/cso/ei748/vital.pdf>

### Difficulties and future plans

92. One difficulty that was mentioned by the participant from the Mauritius Central Statistics Office was that currently all data processing has to be conducted by the Central Information Systems Division (under the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology). The Statistics Office does not have any IT professionals to intervene rapidly to problems in connection with IT related issues. To address this issue, the Central Statistics Office is implementing an IT action plan consisting of investment in a centralized database and analysis technology. Vital statistics will benefit from this investment through the reduction of manual capturing, coding and validation of vital records. The improved system will also enhance the analysis and reporting capacity of the Statistics Office.

93. The Civil Status Office is currently working on providing online registration services, in both English and French.

### *Mozambique*<sup>7</sup>

#### Vital statistics

94. The vital statistics system in Mozambique is centralized and the National Institute of Statistics is the responsible agency. The main sources of vital statistics in the country are population censuses and sample surveys. The latest population census was conducted in 2007 and questions were asked on children ever born and living, births in the last 12 months and survival of the children, and household deaths occurred in the last 12 months and whether the deaths were pregnancy-related. The census preliminary results were published in 2008.

95. The latest demographic survey – Demographic and Health Survey was conducted in 2003 by the National Institute of Statistics. Fertility and mortality questions asked in the survey were children ever born and children living, birth history, as well as the survival of siblings. The survey used the stratified two-stage probability sample design and sample fraction is 2.9% covering the entire country. The survey results were published in 2005.

96. The civil registration system in Mozambique is functional. However the linkage between the National Directorate of Registries and Notaries (DNRN) and the National Institute of Statistics does not exist and there is no vital statistics derived from the civil registration system.

#### Civil registration

97. The civil registration system is centralized and administered by the National Directorate of Registries and Notaries (DNRN). The registration is compulsory. Local registration offices include civil registration posts, civil registration hospital posts, mobile

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<sup>7</sup> Representatives Mozambique did not participate in the workshop and information in the following session is gathered from pre-workshop assignments from Mozambique.

brigades and local authorities. The registration of births, foetal deaths and deaths is conducted by civil registration conservatories, regular posts and posts in the hospitals. There are also mobile brigades registering live births for remote areas. Religious and civil marriages are registered in the civil registration conservatories and traditional marriages are registered by local authorities. Divorces with mutual consent are registered by conservatories and those without consent are registered by the courthouse.

98. The information collected at local level is transmitted to regional offices and thereafter to the national office. The transfer of registration records of statistical forms to the National Institute of Statistics is not functional and there is no vital statistics derived from the system. The estimate of birth registration coverage can be obtained from one question asked on the 2007 population census questionnaire – whether people 17 years of age and younger are registered. The preliminary results released for the city of Maputo indicated that 57% of the people who are 1 year or younger were registered.<sup>8</sup> There is no information on the death registration coverage.

#### Difficulties and future plans

99. There are three main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Mozambique. First, the civil registration coverage is low. There are a number of reasons for the low coverage: (1) accessibility of the service is a challenge for people living in certain areas; (2) there is a lack of awareness of the public on the importance of civil registration; and (3) there is a fee for late registration, which hampers the registration.

100. The second issue relates to the quality of the registration. There is a problem of late registration, for example. People tend to register births only when necessary, i.e., for vaccination or for school enrollment. For marriage registration, legal marriage could happen a long time after the marital union and only when legal marriage occurs the event gets registered. In both cases, vital events are registered much later than when the events actually occur. Over-registration could also be a problem, which happens when someone loses his or her birth certificate and would just re-register.

101. The third issue is connected in particular to the production of vital statistics. There is no protocol on transferring registration forms from the National Directorate of Registries and Notaries to the National Institute of Statistics.

102. To improve the coverage and reporting of vital statistics, Mozambique plans to (1) conduct advocacy campaigns to raise the public awareness on the importance of civil registration; (2) increase the number of registration posts in hospital to capture more births; (3) improve the human resources for the task of registration; (4) accelerate the computerization of the registration process; and (5) improve the working relationship between DNRN and the National Institute of Statistics to facilitate the information flows.

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<sup>8</sup> Preliminary census tabulations for Maputo city, available online at <http://www.ine.gov.mz/censo2007/result/mc11/ecvil/pop1a17>

## *Namibia*

### Vital statistics

103. The vital statistics system in Namibia is centralized and the Central Bureau of Statistics is the responsible agency. The main sources of vital statistics in Namibia are population censuses and sample surveys. The latest population census was conducted in 2001 and questions were asked on children ever born and living, last births occurred to women and survival of the children, and household deaths occurred in the last four years. The census results were first published in 2003 and the total fertility rate, infant mortality rate and life expectancy were obtained.

104. The latest demographic survey - Namibia Intercensal Demographic Survey (NIDS) was conducted in 2006 by the Central Bureau of Statistics and fertility and mortality questions asked in the survey were children ever born and children living. The survey used the stratified two-stage probability sample design and the sample fraction was 2.9% covering the entire country. The survey results are not published yet.

105. The civil registration system in Namibia is functional. However because the system is manually operated, there is no vital statistics compiled from the system. The Ministry of Health and Social Services also has the responsibility of collecting data on births, foetal deaths and deaths. Unfortunately, there is no information on whether vital statistics are compiled or published. The quality of the data is not known either.

### Civil registration

106. The civil registration system in Namibia is centralized and administered by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration (MHAI). The registration is compulsory and certain rules are there to enforce the registration. For example, child needs to have birth certificate to register for school. A person also needs identification card to access public services (hospital and bank etc), to work etc. In addition, it is illegal to bury a body without a death certificate.

107. Until this date, the civil registration system in Namibia is operated manually and as a result, there is no vital statistics derived from the system. The completeness of birth and death registration was estimated to be around 75% and 70%, respectively. The estimates were obtained from two questions on the 2001 population census questionnaire – whether the last live birth to a woman and household death(s) occurred in 2001 were registered.

### Difficulties and future plans

108. There are three main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Namibia. First, the civil registration coverage is low. There are a number of reasons for the low coverage: (1) civil registration was non-compulsory for indigenous population in the country before its independence from South Africa in 1990, and therefore it is still a challenge to have registration for the entire population; (2) civil registration is also hampered by culture and custom beliefs, i.e., some tribal groups

hesitate to follow the government instructions; and (3) awareness level is low among vulnerable and nomadic groups since they hardly listen to the radio or have access to other media that are used to educate public on the importance of civil registration.

109. The second issue relates to the high proportion of late registration. Many people choose to register only if absolutely necessary, for example, for enrolling in elementary school.

110. The third issue is connected in particular to the production of vital statistics. The civil registration is still manually operated and this contributes to the lack of vital statistics. There is also a lack of consistency in the concepts and definitions used by the civil registrar and the Central Bureau of Statistics. For example, the civil registration system still uses the old boundary districts, instead of the new demarcated regional and Constituencies boundaries currently being adopted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in its data collection activities. In addition, the current registration form does not include key statistical items such as geographical information where the vital events occur and some basic demographic characteristics.

111. To improve the coverage and reporting of vital statistics, Namibia plans to (1) conduct advocacy campaigns to raise the public awareness on the importance of civil registration; (2) increase the number of hospital registration sites and sub-regional offices to improve the registration coverage and increase the budget on mobile registration unit to reach remote areas; (3) continue the work on automating the civil registration system, under a joint committee of multiple stakeholders; and (4) revise the registration forms so that the concepts and definitions are harmonized between the Civil Registrar and the Central Bureau of Statistics. The Central Bureau of Statistics is also engaged on activities to build its institutional capacity in compiling vital statistics – there are plans to revise the Statistics Act of Namibia to strengthen the coordinating role of the Bureau in producing vital statistics. The Bureau of Statistics also plans to decentralize its functions at regional levels – so vital statistics can be compiled at the regional level.

## ***South Africa***

### Vital statistics

112. The vital statistics system in South Africa is centralized and the Statistics South Africa is the responsible agency. The main sources of vital statistics in the country are the civil registration system, population censuses and sample surveys.

113. The civil registration system in the country collects information on live births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages and divorces: live births, stillbirths, deaths and marriages are registered by the Department of Home Affairs and divorces are registered by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. Registration records are transmitted from the civil registrar to Statistics South Africa for coding, editing, compilation and dissemination. Special attention is given to the coding and processing of deaths and stillbirths records because of the cause-of-death information associated with those records. Quality control is conducted at every stage of data processing. Statistics on



live births are published annually on *Recorded Live Births*<sup>9</sup>; statistics on deaths are published annually on *Mortality and Causes of Death: Findings from Death Notification*<sup>10</sup>; and statistics on marriages and divorces are published annually on *Marriages and Divorces*<sup>11</sup>.

114. Population census is also used to collect information on fertility and mortality and to evaluate the quality of the birth and death registration. The latest population census was conducted in 2001 and questions on fertility and mortality were asked on children ever born and living, orphanhood, household deaths in the last 12 months and whether they are accidental deaths or pregnancy-related. The census results were published in 2003 and the following indicators were derived from the 2001 census – crude birth rate, total fertility rate, crude death rate, infant mortality rate, child mortality rate and under-five mortality rate.

115. The last two sample surveys that collected fertility and mortality statistics were the 2007 Community Survey and 2003 Demographic and Health Survey. The former was a demographic survey administered by the Statistics South Africa and the latter was a health survey, administered by the Department of Health. Both surveys used two-stage stratified sampling, covering the entire the country. The 2007 Community Survey collected information on children ever born and living, orphanhood and recent household deaths; the survey report was published in 2008<sup>12</sup>. The 2003 Demographic and Health Survey detailed information on birth history of women and the survey report was published in 2004.

116. Fertility and mortality statistics obtained from the censuses and sample surveys are not completely consistent with those derived from the civil registration system. The main reason for the inconsistency is the incomplete coverage of birth and death registration in South Africa. However, it was observed that the percentage distributions by selected variables such as age, sex and province from the three sources were similar.

### Civil registration

117. The civil registration system in South Africa is centralized. Live births, stillbirths, deaths and marriages are registered by the Department of Home Affairs and divorces are registered by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. The system intends to register vital events occurred in the country as well as those occurred abroad to South African citizens. Vital events occurred abroad are registered through South African diplomatic and consular missions. South Africa also uses mobile trucks to reach mobile

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<sup>9</sup> The latest issue is *Recorded Live Births, 2007*, available online at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0305/P03052007.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> The latest issue is *Mortality and Causes of Death: Findings from Death Notification, 2006*, available online at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/statsdownload.asp?ppn=P0309.3&SCH=4254>

<sup>11</sup> The latest issue is *Marriages and Divorces, 2007*, available online at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/statsdownload.asp?ppn=P0307&SCH=4300>

<sup>12</sup> The 2007 Community Survey results are available online at [http://www.statssa.gov.za/community\\_new/content.asp](http://www.statssa.gov.za/community_new/content.asp)

population and when there is a major event in the country with a large gathering of people.

118. Live births are to be registered within 30 days and for those that are registered after 15 years, certification of headman and a special committee approval are needed for the registration. Late registration occurs when a birth is registered after 30 days, but there is no fee for the late registration. Birth is not registered if the child dies before the registration occurs.

119. For the registration of stillbirths and deaths, a 2-page death notification is used. The first page is to be completed by the registrar while the second page is on cause-of-death and needs to be filled by medical professionals (for deaths due to natural causes). For deaths occurred due to non-natural causes, police officers need to certify the death certificate. After the second page of the death notification is completed by medical professionals (Department of Health), the form is returned to the Department of Home Affairs. According to the rules, no burial is permitted unless a death certificate is issued. This rule however is not strictly followed.

120. Marriages, including civil unions are registered by priests or the Department of Home Affairs officials, while divorces are registered by courts.

121. The completeness of births and deaths registration was recently evaluated to be 86% (2007 assessment) and 83% (2006 assessment). The birth registration assessment is conducted by comparing recorded live birth to those estimated from a sample survey. Death registration completeness was estimated by using the Preston-Hill method, a method that uses information from two consecutive population censuses and the registered deaths during the inter-censal period. The completeness of marriage and divorce registration has not been evaluated in the past ten years.

#### Difficulties and future plans

122. Although the civil registration system and derived vital statistics have, to a larger extent, met the need of users, there are areas that need further improvement: (1) there is late registration of vital events; (2) there is a time-lag between the occurrence of vital event and publication of statistics (an average of 1 to 2-year delay); (3) vital statistics are subject to content errors and omissions, e.g., information on education, occupation, industry, place of occurrence etc, are incomplete; (4) there is under-registration of deaths particularly among children and those in the rural areas; (5) misreporting and insufficient reporting of cause-of-death is also a problem; and (6) the administrative nature of the civil registration records does not always allow in-depth analysis based on the vital statistics.

123. The following initiatives are being taken to improve the civil registration coverage in South Africa: (1) the Department of Health has, within some hospitals and clinics, created registration centers to capture more births and deaths; (2) the Department of Home Affairs uses mobile transport as registration centers; (3) the Department of Social Development encourages mothers to register themselves and their children so that

they can qualify for social grants; and (4) at provincial level, there are civil registration committees that are tasked with the responsibility of improving civil registration in the provinces.

124. To improve the quality of data from civil registration in the country, Statistics South Africa has plans to provide assistance on certifying cause-of-death and completing registration forms accurately.

## ***Swaziland***

### Vital statistics

125. The vital statistics system in Swaziland is centralized and the Central Statistics Office is the responsible agency. The main sources of vital statistics in the country are population censuses and sample surveys. The latest population census was conducted in 2007 and questions on fertility and mortality included children ever born and living, orphanhood, live births in the last 12 months and survival of the children, household deaths in the last 12 months and whether they are pregnancy-related, and the survival of sisters (for maternal mortality). The census results are not available yet.

126. The latest survey collecting fertility and mortality information is the 2006/07 Demographic and Health Survey. The survey was a national-level sample survey and was implemented by the Central Statistics Office. The sample clusters were selected from a list of enumeration areas defined in the 1997 Swaziland Population and Housing Census. Questions on birth history of women as well as survival of siblings were included in the survey to obtain fertility and mortality estimates. The survey results are not published yet.

127. There is no vital statistics compiled from the civil registration system in Swaziland.

### Civil registration

128. The civil registration system is centralized and administered by the Registrar General, under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The mandate of civil registration is now being transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Civil registration in Swaziland is compulsory but is not enforced.

129. Until this date, the civil registration system in Swaziland is operated manually and therefore, there is no vital statistics derived from the system. In terms of the completeness of the system, a question was asked in the 2007 Swaziland population census on whether the birth was registered and the results are not available yet. The 2000 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of Swaziland, however, estimated that the births of 53.5 percent of the children under five years of age in the country were registered.

### Difficulties and future plans

130. There are two main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Swaziland. First, the civil registration coverage is low. There are a number of

reasons for the low coverage: (1) there is a lack of awareness of the public on the importance of civil registration; (2) civil registration is not a priority for the government and therefore there is always a lack of financial and human resources for the Registrar General to operate effectively; (3) the staff working at the Registrar General do not take the registration function seriously and therefore leads to inefficiency and mistakes; and (4) there is no coordination between the Registrar General and the Central Statistics Office.

131. The second issue is connected to the production of vital statistics. The civil registration is still manually operated and this contributes to the lack of vital statistics. There is also a lack of manpower in the Central Statistics Office and demographic statistics does not always have priority in data collection and compilation.

132. To improve the coverage and reporting of vital statistics, Swaziland plans to (1) upgrade the Registrar General to a Departmental level agency so hopefully more governmental attention would be given to the civil registration activities; (2) provide more registration sites and improve accessibility of civil registration offices to the public; (3) start working on automating the civil registration system, and link the system to the newly initiated population registration system in the country; and (4) set up a unit of vital statistics within the Registration General to improve the compilation and reporting of vital statistics.

### ***Tanzania - Zanzibar***<sup>13</sup>

#### Vital statistics

133. The vital statistics system in Zanzibar is centralized and the Office of the Chief Government Statistician (under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs) is the responsible agency. The main sources of vital statistics in Zanzibar are population censuses and sample surveys. The latest population census was conducted in 2002 and questions on fertility and mortality included children ever born and living, orphanhood, live births in the last 12 months, and household deaths occurred in the last 12 months. The census results were published in 2003.

134. The latest survey in Zanzibar collecting fertility and mortality information was the 2004/05 Demographic and Health Survey. The survey was a national-level sample survey and was implemented by the National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania, Office of the Chief Government Statistician – Zanzibar, the Reproductive and Child Health Section, the Policy and Planning Department of the Ministry of Health, and the Safe Motherhood Initiatives at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare – Zanzibar. Questions on birth history of women as well as survival of siblings were included in the survey to obtain fertility and mortality estimates. The survey results were published in 2005.

135. The civil registration system in Zanzibar is functional but there is no vital statistics compiled from the system. Since the 1980s until early 2000, efforts have been made on improving the civil registration system, by the government as well as by outside donors. As a result, the coverage of civil registration has improved, while unfortunately

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<sup>13</sup> Participants from the mainland Tanzania did not participate in the workshop.

the linkage of civil registration and vital statistics did not benefit from the numerous projects.

### Civil registration

136. The civil registration system is centralized and administered by the Registrar General's Office, under the Ministry of Good Governance and Constitutional Affairs. Local registration units include health offices for birth and death registration and court office or priest/ministers for marriage and divorce registration.

137. The computerization process of the registered births and deaths records is underway and records registered between 2005 and 2007 are mostly in electronic format.

138. The coverage of birth registration in Zanzibar is around 90% and the coverage of death registration is about 50%. The assessment was conducted in 1995, using the dual record method.

### Difficulties and future plans

139. There are two main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Zanzibar. First, the civil registration coverage needs to be improved. There are a number of reasons for the incomplete coverage: (1) there is a lack of awareness of the public on the importance of civil registration; (2) civil registration is not a priority for the government and therefore there is always lack of financial and human resources for the Registrar to operate effectively; (3) there is not enough knowledge on the monitoring and evaluation of the registration system; and (4) there is no coordination between the Registrar and the Statistics Office.

140. The second issue is connected to the production of vital statistics. There is a lack of manpower in the Statistics Office and vital statistics does not always have priority among all data collection and compilation activities.

141. To improve the coverage and reporting of vital statistics, Zanzibar plans to (1) provide trainings to local and district registrars as well as to statisticians in the Office of the Chief Government Statistician; (2) establish a vital statistics unit within the social and demographic statistics section to focus on the processing and production of vital statistics; and (3) working with UNFPA in a three-year project to strengthen both the civil registration and the vital statistics system, including establishing an electronic network for information sharing.

## ***Zambia***

### Vital statistics

142. The vital statistics system in Zambia is centralized and the Central Statistics Office is the responsible agency. Main sources of vital statistics in the country are population censuses and sample surveys. The latest population census was conducted in 2000 and questions on fertility and mortality included children ever born and living, as

well as births in the last 12 months and survival of the children. The census results were first published in 2003 and total fertility rate, infant mortality rate, under-five mortality rate, crude death rate and life expectancy were obtained.

143. The latest survey collecting fertility and mortality information of Zambia was the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey. The survey was a national-level sample survey (0.13%) and was implemented by the Central Statistics Office. Questions on birth history of women as well as survival of siblings were included in the survey to obtain fertility and mortality estimates. The preliminary results were published in 2008.

144. The civil registration system in Zambia is functional. However because the system is manually operated and there is no established linkage between the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship (civil registrar in Zambia) and the Central Statistics Office, there is no vital statistics compiled from the system.

#### Civil registration

145. The civil registration system is centralized and administered by the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship (under the Ministry of Home Affairs). The registration became compulsory for everyone in the country since 1973 and the system registers births, deaths and marriages. The registration is conducted by regional offices (decentralized registration) while the issuance of certificate is only carried out by the central registration office at the national level. Local authorities and the Ministry of Health are also involved in the registration – births occurred in the hospital and health institutions are provided with a Record of Birth or an Under-Five Children's Card for the registration of birth; while for deaths occurred in the hospital, cause-of-death information is completed by the hospital. For deaths occurred outside of the hospital, either a police report or a letter from the local headman or chief is necessary for the registration.

146. The civil registration system in Zambia is operated manually and there is no vital statistics derived from the system. The completeness of birth was estimated to be around 10% from a recent survey on birth registration.

#### Difficulties and future plans

147. There are two main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Zambia. First, the civil registration coverage is low. There are a number of reasons for the low coverage: (1) it is a challenge to have registration for the entire population; the registration is especially low in villages and rural areas where there is no formal system of registration; and (2) awareness level is low among the public – people do not understand the value of obtaining birth and death certificates due to lack of sensitization.

148. The second issue is connected in particular to the production of vital statistics. The civil registration is still manually operated and this contributes to the lack of vital statistics. There is also a delay in the transmission of registration forms from local to the national registration office and thereafter to the Central Statistics Office for processing. In addition, there is no legal basis of the information transfer between the Registrar and

the Statistics Office. Lack of manpower in the Statistics Office for the compilation and production of vital statistics is also a difficulty – inadequate number of staff and lack of training are the two contributing factors.

149. To improve the quality and reporting of vital statistics, Zambia plans to (1) provide more registration sites in villages to improve the registration coverage; (2) revise the birth registration form to start collecting more detailed information related to births; (3) decentralize the function of certificate issuance so people would receive the certificate following the registration; and (4) start involving the traditional leaders in the registration process.

150. The Central Statistics Office, in collaboration with other stakeholders, also starts to implement the Sample Vital Registration with Verbal Autopsy (SAVVY). The SAVVY is not to replace the current registration system, but to support and strengthen the reporting, recording, analysis and dissemination of vital statistics, in particular on births and deaths. When implemented, SAVVY can provide nationally representative vital statistics, including information on levels and causes of death which are not available from other sources.

## ***Zimbabwe***

### Vital statistics

151. The vital statistics system in Zimbabwe is centralized and the Central Statistical Office (CSO) is the responsible agency. Main sources of vital statistics in the country are population censuses and sample surveys. Mortality statistics collected from the civil registration system in the country are also produced by CSO. The latest population census was conducted in 2002 and fertility and mortality questions included children ever born and living, age at first marriage, last births occurred to women and survival of the children, and household deaths occurred in the last 12 months and whether they are pregnancy-related. The census results were published in 2004 and general fertility rate, total fertility rate, crude birth rate, infant mortality rate, crude death rate and maternal mortality rate were obtained.

152. The latest survey collecting fertility and mortality information of Zimbabwe was the 2005/06 Demographic and Health Survey. The survey was a national-level sample survey and was implemented by the Central Statistics Office. Questions on birth history of women as well as survival of siblings were included in the survey to obtain fertility and mortality estimates. The survey report was published in 2007.

153. The civil registration system in Zimbabwe is functional. In order to facilitate the fast and easy access of registration records, staff members responsible for vital statistics (administratively under CSO) are housed at the Registrar General's Department. However currently only mortality statistics are compiled and due to lack of resources in the office, there is a backlog in data processing – 2002 mortality data are being published currently. Comparison among different data sources is not possible because of the differences in coverage.

### Civil registration

154. The civil registration system is centralized and administered by the Registrar General's Department (under the Ministry of Home Affairs). The births and deaths registration is compulsory in the country. The registration of marriages is not compulsory. The registration of births, foetal deaths and deaths is conducted by health offices while the registration of marriages and divorces is carried out by the court offices.

155. The 2005/06 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey estimated that 37% of the children 5 years and under have a birth certificate, while additional 36% of the births were indicated as registered but did not have a birth certificate. There is no other information on the completeness of the civil registration system in Zimbabwe.

### Difficulties and future plans

156. There are two main issues related to the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Zimbabwe. First, the civil registration coverage is not functioning well. There are a number of reasons: (1) it is a challenge to have registration for the entire population and the registration is especially difficult for remote areas; and (2) some sub-offices under the Registrar General's Department are not operational and people living in surrounding areas have to travel long distances to register or wait for the national mobile registrations to reach the area; and (3) there is a lack of resources – both financially and manpower, due to the political and financial situation in the country. Staff turnover is also very high.

157. The second issue is connected to the production of vital statistics. The civil registration is still manually operated and this contributes to the lack of vital statistics. There is also a delay in transferring registration forms from local to the national registration office and thereafter to the Central Statistics Office for processing. Resource constraints also contributed to the lack and delay of the production of vital statistics.

158. To improve the quality and reporting of vital statistics, Zimbabwe plans to (1) work with the help of UNFPA (a project started in 2008) to clear the un-processed mortality data by adding ten more posts on the coding of deaths data and also in securing storage space for the filing of death forms; (2) further decentralize the birth registration by establishing offices at major hospitals that offer maternity services to encourage early registration; (3) adopt the ICD10 for the cause of death coding rather than the ICD9, which is currently being used; and (4) continue the current project that computerizes the civil registration system and once it is completed, CSO will be receiving mortality data electronically. Administratively, the Central Statistical Office is becoming a semi-autonomous agency and hopefully this would entail more statistical posts in the agency.

## **Session 10. Compilation of vital statistics at international level**

159. A representative of UNSD made a presentation on the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* and the level of responses to the Yearbook from SADC countries. The *Demographic Yearbook* is an international data collection and dissemination tool,



which collects national demographic and social statistics through a number of questionnaires and disseminates those statistics at the international level.

160. The Vital Statistics Questionnaire, more specifically, collects live births, deaths, late foetal deaths, marriages and divorces from more than 230 countries. This questionnaire is sent to countries annually. The questionnaire also collects metadata such as the completeness of the statistics, methods used for data quality assessment, and whether the data were collected by occurrence or by registration.

161. From what had been collected from the participating SADC countries, it was found out that the only two countries are able to provide vital statistics generated from a civil registration on a regular basis (Mauritius and South Africa). The other countries either do not provide any vital statistics in the past 10 years, or sparsely because those data are usually based on a census or national projections. As for the availability of two population census table on fertility and mortality – children born alive and children living, out of the 10 countries that have conducted censuses in the 2000 round and asked questions on children ever born and living, only one country provided data to both tables and the four countries provided data to only one table. The last part of the presentation explored ways that can improve the response rate from SADC countries.

162. Following the presentation, a number of countries pointed out that weak civil registration system in countries contributed to the lack of vital statistics in the region. Sometimes countries have to resort to projections for the total number of births and deaths and disaggregation by other key variables is not possible.

### **Session 11. Provider's presentation**

163. A video was shown to demonstrate how commercial software can be used to register births and deaths electronically. There are many choices for similar software on the market and this particular one is developed by the Genesis System, Inc, headquartered in the United States of America.

### **Session 12a. Group discussion topic 1 - Training and public education**

164. The participants were divided into 2 groups and to discuss specific assignments related to the topic on training and public education. There were four questions in all:

*(a) List 18 target groups that are important to a good education and communication programme on civil registration and vital statistics*

165. The 18 target groups were listed in the Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Developing Information, Education and Communication (Para. 250). They are:

- (1) Government (heads of State, concerned ministers and deputy ministers, and regional and local government officials etc.)
- (2) Civil registration and vital statistics staff

- (3) Medical societies/practitioners
- (4) Hospitals, health clinics, township hospitals, rural health stations, mobile health units, public health officials, nursing homes and homes for the elderly.
- (5) Coroners (or their equivalents).
- (6) Midwives, birth attendants, village leaders etc.
- (7) Funeral directors and morticians (or their equivalents).
- (8) Ecclesiastical authorities/religious groups/spiritual leaders
- (9) Persons responsible for customary religious/traditional marriages.
- (10) Persons responsible for civil marriages.
- (11) The courts, law societies and legal education officials
- (12) Organizations concerned with nutritional campaigns, such as breastfeeding, and with immunization and vaccination campaigns.
- (13) Organizations concerned with human rights
- (14) Appropriate educational institutions and groups.
- (15) Public opinion makers, regional and community leaders, tribal chiefs and village elders
- (16) The general population, neo-literacy, aboriginal and ethnic groups.
- (17) Women's groups and associations
- (18) Main users of civil registration/vital statistics information and data (including planners, policy makers and researchers).

166. During the discussion, the participants acknowledged that all 18 groups were important because almost everyone in the society was related to civil registration and vital statistics. Priorities maybe given to certain groups such as Group (1) (Government and State Officials) because of the importance of political will in the process of setting up or maintaining a functional civil registration system. The importance of Group (4) (hospitals and health clinics) and (17) (Women's group) were also strongly emphasized. However it was noted that the importance of each group may vary depending on the situation in different countries.

167. Participants also noted that different communication strategies should be used for different target groups. In Madagascar there are sub-committees working with all the 18 target groups, at different levels. For example, in order to target pregnant women in rural area, committees at village level were formed to give out information and to talk to pregnant women in the village into registering their births (Madagascar and Lesotho). Another strategy to boost the registration of vital events occurred in remote area was through the use of registration buses visiting the area regularly (Zimbabwe). Having health professions available on the bus also helped the remote population appreciating the registration work.

168. Other practices found useful were (a) providing pamphlets and brochures to women who make prenatal visits on the importance of birth registration through health professions (doctors and midwives) (Madagascar and Mauritius) and (b) registering births and deaths in the hospital by a civil status officer stationed in the hospital (Madagascar, Mauritius and South Africa).

169. In DRC, a successful public campaign on birth registration was carried out by the President's wife when she appeared in public to register her baby after the birth.

*(b) Give suggestions for a campaign to education the medical profession concerning civil registration and vital statistics*

170. Under this discussion item, a number of participants suggested that doctors and midwives should be given exact instructions on how registration needed to be done. Participants also felt that it would be useful to include the information on civil registration and vital statistics in medical professional's curriculum.

171. Joint work of civil status officers and medical doctors could help because the former could sensitize doctors and nurses regarding the essence of civil registration and vital statistics. In addition, by working together with medical professionals, civil status officers could provide feedbacks to them on how well the registration had been done so further improvements could be made.

172. The participants emphasized the importance of accurate information on cause of death while educating medical professionals. One suggestion was to establish health information system at each and every hospital or health institution that is responsible for coding the cause of death.

*(c) What is the "Nansen" certificate and how is civil registration and vital statistics involved with it?*

173. The "Nansen certificate" is issued under the United Nations conventions on civil and political rights, under which refugees made homeless by war are recognized as being in need of some sort of protection and status. In order to enable them to travel to countries other than those in which the misfortunes of war leave them, all countries affiliated to the United Nations have agreed to recognize those documents as being the only travel documents that the individuals could obtain.<sup>14</sup>

174. The term was new to most of the participants. However a few countries did mention that either a Nansen certificate or something similar was provided to refugees. For example, The Home Affairs Department in Namibia issues ID cards for refugees, specifying the period of stay and other basic information. Those ID cards were necessary to receiving services in the country. Another example was the Nansen certificate issued by the government in Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia, in collaboration with UNHCR. In Botswana, qualified refugees with such permit could even find a job in the country.

175. In terms of the involvement of civil registration and vital statistics with the Nansen certificate, the participants noted that births and deaths occurred to refugees were also registered according to the law in some countries, such as Tanzania.

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<sup>14</sup> *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Developing Information, Education and Communication*, United Nations, New York, 1998. Para. 333.

*(d) How can entertainment programmes and folk media be used in the strategy to improve civil registration and vital statistics?*

176. Regarding strategies to take advantage of entertainment programmes and folk media, the participants felt that all forms of entertainment programmes and occasions, such as drama, play, cartoons, short TV series, soap opera, public gathering and festivals, should be used. Those media forms are particularly useful in conveying the message to people who are illiterate. It is important to use local language in the programme, however, so the message is understandable to everybody. The age of targeted group should also be taken into consideration when a programme is developed. For example, the birth registration campaign through entertainment programmes and folk media could focus mainly on women at child-bearing age.

### **Session 12b. Group discussion topic 2 – Model civil registration law**

177. The participants were divided into 2 groups and discussed four topics related to the civil registration law in their countries:

*(a) Whether a law is put in place for registering vital events in the country? And (b) how does it compare to the draft organic law<sup>15</sup>?*

178. All participating countries have civil registration law. For all participating countries except Malawi, civil registration is mandatory, guarded by the law.

179. While comparing with the draft organic law, participants from many countries recognized that the coordination function and the statistical function were often not specified in the civil registration law. Although in some cases coordination and statistical functions were being carried out in daily activities, it was necessary to establish legal basis for those activities. Another area that needed to be addressed was that not all vital events were covered in the civil registration law. For example, the registration of foetal deaths and divorces were often not included in the law.

*(c) Is there a need to update the current civil registration law; and (d) how could the current law be improved?*

180. For many countries in the region, there is a need to review and revise the current law since some of them have not been updated for the past 20 years.

181. Participants from Swaziland pointed out that the informants required by the civil registration law are very limited so sometimes when a vital event occurs, none of the informants required by the law is present. Therefore there is a need to update the law in this regard. Another example of country that might need revision of the civil registration law is Lesotho. The country is planning to adopt a de-centralized civil registration system and its civil registration law needs to be revised accordingly.

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<sup>15</sup> *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, Preparation of a Legal Framework*, United Nations, 1998, Para. 403

182. Another issue raised during the discussion was that the civil registration law in some countries was not integrated – one law was on births and deaths registration and another one on the registration of marriages and divorces. Under such practice it is difficult to have harmonized registration laws for all vital events. In addition, making updates could be difficult because each single one has to be reviewed and people in charge of one law might not be familiar with the others.

183. Enforcing penalties on non-registration or late registration of vital events were also discussed. Most participants felt that putting the penalty clause in the law needed to be considered carefully. For SADC countries, implementing penalties for those who register the vital events late might have serious adverse consequences - non-registration.

184. During the discussion, participants also emphasized that statisticians in some countries were not necessarily familiar with the civil registration law and needed to update themselves with such knowledge.

### **Session 13. Visit to the Malawi Department of Registrar General**

185. The Malawi Department of Registrar General is located in downtown Blantyre. The Department is responsible of the registration of vital events and enterprises-businesses. An introduction was provided by the Registrar General on how the civil registration system operates in Malawi. From the visit to the Registrar General's Office, the following observations can be made:

186. First, it is difficult for Malawians to access the registration service. There is only one registration office in the country and it is not possible for most people living in Malawi to reach the office, given the fact that Malawi is of size larger than 100,000 square kilometers and has more than 13 million people (as of 2008). In addition, the registration office for births and deaths is located on the fourth floor and there is no elevator in the building, hence the service is not convenient for people with physical challenges.

187. Second, the registration office is under-staffed. There are only seven people working in the Department of Registrar General who are responsible for the registration of births and deaths.

188. Third, all the registration procedures are carried out manually and registration records are stored in binders. The fact that registration records are stored in binders only by date of registration makes it difficult to retrieve registration records at a later date.

189. Fourth, the registration of vital events is not only incomplete but also delayed. People usually register a vital event when absolutely necessary, for example, birth is registered only when acquiring a passport. Therefore on the registration book, one can see a record of 60-year old person recently came to register his birth, which happened 60 years ago.

190. Last, legal documents are not necessary for the registration of births and deaths, which leaves room for fraud. This is mainly due to the fact that only a small proportion of the population in Malawi has any legal documents to prove their identities.

191. It was pointed out by the Registrar General that the civil registration function will be transferred to the newly created National Registration Bureau.

#### **Session 14. Overview of the SADC Statistics work programme**

192. Mr. Jere from the SADC Secretariat, made a presentation on the new structure of the SADC Secretariat, the SADC statistical system and the SADC statistical work programme. Under the new structure, the statistical function of SADC Secretariat is under the Policy and Strategic Planning unit in the Office of the Executive Secretary.

193. The statistical function within the SADC Secretariat is part of the SADC Statistical system, which contains collectively the following: national statistics systems of the SADC member states, the Statistical Programme at the SADC Secretariat, SADC Statistical Committee and other related mechanisms that support the above three parts.

194. The overall objective of the SADC Statistical Programme is to support regional integration by making available relevant, timely and accurate statistical information to be used in SADC planning, policy formulation, protocol monitoring and decision-making. Mr. Jere further informed the participants regarding various statistics projects that were currently undertaken by the SADC Secretariat and emphasized that the success of these projects was highly dependant on the responsiveness of the national statistics systems of member states.

### **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

#### ***General***

195. The participants recognized that this workshop is an outstanding event that was long overdue as the issue of civil registration as a preferred source of vital statistics was not focused upon in the region for the past fifteen years. In that regard, the Workshop expressed its appreciation to the United Nations Statistics Division and to the Secretariat of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) for conducting this workshop and to the Government of Malawi for hosting it.

196. The Workshop concluded that the state of the art of both the civil registration and vital statistics in the SADC region, with very few exceptions, points to the need of numerous remedial actions, as they, in most part, do not comply with international standards nor, more importantly, do they meet the need of decision-makers, citizens, communities and development purposes. In the vast majority of countries in the region, the Workshop concluded, the coverage of civil registration of births and deaths is quite low; which, on the other hand, has detrimental impact on generating relevant, accurate and regular vital statistics. Substituting civil registration with other sources, such as population and housing censuses and households surveys, which is a current practice in the region out of necessity, does not provide sustainable, regular and timely production of vital statistics, nor does it enable establishing time series that would allow for more in-depth analysis of these essential demographic phenomena.

197. The Workshop concluded that in all the countries participating at this Workshop there is a clear understanding of the need to use civil registration as a source of vital statistics; that there needs to be a direct link between civil registration and statistics; and that there is a solid knowledge of international standards and recommendations in this field. The Workshop noted, therefore, that the lack of knowledge about the recommended framework is by no means the source of the problems in generating reliable vital statistics. Rather, it is the consequence of a concatenation of adverse circumstances affecting both the civil registration and official statistics.

198. In reviewing the current circumstances in the countries of the region the Workshop concluded that improvements are needed in almost all the areas of concerns: the presence of the civil registration law, its enforcement, the existence of the civil registration service, the compliance with international standards in terms of topics, coverage and procedures, availability of statistical capacities to compile and process data, and routine dissemination of vital statistics.

199. The Workshop recommended that national governments need to commit themselves toward improving civil registration and vital statistics as both have crucial impact on the lives of individuals, society-at-large, planning, development and decision making. Without such a commitment followed-up by concrete actions in that regard the improvement in these areas is not likely to occur.

### *Civil registration*

200. Civil registration, i.e. registering of vital events, is mandatory or is to become mandatory shortly in every country of the region. However, the Workshop concluded that there are a number of obstacles and challenges that hamper an efficient and complete coverage of civil registration.

201. The workshop recognized that, out of the major components of the civil registration system, namely:

- a. Legal framework
- b. Civil administration infrastructure
- c. Population participation
- d. Service to the public
- e. Ensuring confidentiality
- f. Quality assurance (checks and balances)

Each has almost equal specific weight and that all of them need to be put in place in order for the system to operate. Yet, the existence of the law is certainly a major prerequisite of the system, and so is the presence of the functioning civil administration infrastructure, as the other components may be upgraded gradually.

202. The Workshop also observed that statisticians who are responsible for the processing and compilation of vital statistics are often not familiar with the law. It recommended that statisticians should familiarize themselves with the law that concerns civil registration and training programs in the civil registration law could also be developed, as well as the other way around, training registrars in basic vital statistics.

203. Not only there needs to be a legal framework firmly put in place, but it needs to be revisited and improved, as this appears to be a weak spot in the regional civil registration systems. In addition, there is a need to invite a much broader discussion and concrete initiatives on the best modalities to enforce the law once it is enacted.

204. In addition, regarding the civil registration law, the Workshop noted with concern that (a) the statistical function and coordination mechanisms often did not exist in the law and (b) not all vital events recommended by the international standards were covered, such as foetal death and divorce. The Workshop therefore recommended that current civil registration legislation in SADC countries needs to be reviewed carefully and revised accordingly, addressing the above two issues.

205. The Workshop noted with concern that the civil administration infrastructure in many cases is not sufficiently robust or numerous nor trained or skilled to perform the registration of births, deaths and marriages in continuous and reliable manner. In certain cases the registration of vital events rests with village chiefs who may not be always equipped or skilled to perform the registration process, and sometimes are not sufficiently literate.



206. The population participation remains another major concern as it is apparent that, in general, people are not aware of the necessity to register births and deaths, as a minimum. The Workshop concluded that there is an immediate need for jump-starting public education campaigns in all the countries in the region. To that end, the Workshop recommends that its conclusions are made available to the Governments in the region with a request to set aside appropriate funding for raising public awareness in terms of benefits of registering vital events. The Workshop also emphasized the importance of involving and educating media in delivering the right message to the public, realizing that different media requires different strategies for reaching the goal, including conveying the message in local languages. The fact that the coverage of vital events by civil registration in the region, with one notable exception (Mauritius), ranges between 10%-80% for births (and is significantly lower for deaths) clearly documents the immediate necessity for undertaking public education on a large scale.

207. The Workshop concluded that establishing checks and balances within the civil registration system is of paramount importance not only from the point of view of the civil registration system, but also from the point of view of statistics that are using it as a source. Irrespective of the method used for assessing the quality and the effectiveness of the system, the conclusion refers to the necessity of establishing regular and routine checks that are applied with the assistance of the statistical agency.

### *Vital statistics*

208. The Workshop concluded that in each country of the region statistics on births and deaths are available to a certain extent. These statistics are sourced primarily in the population census and occasional household survey. The Workshop noted the limitations of using these sources for generating vital statistics: for censuses, this refers to the number of actual questions that can be inserted; as for surveys, this refers primarily to the limitations in generating small areas statistics.

209. Another limitation of these two sources refers to the level of detailed statistics that is necessary for in-depth analysis of fertility and mortality; it is available only through specialized health or demographic surveys and these tend to be few and apart.

210. The Workshop concluded that, with few exceptions (Mauritius, South Africa and, to a certain extent, Botswana) countries in the region do not use civil registration as a source of statistics primarily due to the low coverage of vital events by civil registration. Other reasons also include the lack of coordination between civil registration and statistics and the lack of statistical capacity to process records obtained from civil registration. However, the Workshop concluded that, without significant improvement of coverage rates of civil registration, it would be difficult to put an argument for building up national statistical capacities to compile and process data out of civil registration.

211. Therefore, the Workshop evidently acknowledged the fact that many countries in the region did not have complete coverage for their civil registration systems, which hampers the dissemination of statistics derived from such systems. However the importance of disseminating any available vital statistics obtained from civil registration

system was emphasized, even when the coverage is incomplete. The workshop also noted that importance of publishing accompanying meta data on the quality of statistics.

212. The Workshop concluded that, in few countries in the region where the main source of vital statistics is the civil registration, the wealth, timeliness and quality of statistics clearly points to the fact that this is the optimal arrangement. To that end, the Workshop recommended that all countries continued to work towards achieving this goal.

### ***International standards***

213. The Workshop acknowledged with appreciation a vast and comprehensive body of work on international standards for civil registration and vital statistics produced by the United Nations Statistics Division. The Workshop recommended that all countries in the region undertake all needed efforts to familiarize themselves with the international standards and recommendations and to strive to ensure full compliance.

### ***Coordination***

214. The Workshop concluded that the issues relating to coordination are of particular importance in improving civil registration and vital statistics in the countries of the region. Coordination takes many dimensions, both horizontal and vertical and at all levels: district, province, national and regional.

215. Particularly, the Workshop concluded that there is a need to establish coordination bodies at the national level that will bring together registration authorities, national statistical agency and other ministries that have a stake in the subject matter, such as the ministries of health and interior, for example. Such a body is necessary not only for coordination purposes, but also to give a much needed weight and exposure to the functioning of civil registration system and its input into national statistical system. The conclusion also underscores that this body should preferably include other users as well, such as academia, for example.

216. At the national level it is also important to establish regular working relationships and coordination at all levels. To that end, the Workshop elaborated several possibilities, such as establishing similar coordination bodies at lower levels of civil divisions, or putting together other mechanisms that will allow for regular and detailed exchange of opinion and information between the agencies.

217. As for the regional level, it is recommended that this workshop is followed-up by the development of the regional programme for improving civil registration and vital statistics in the SADC region and that SADC Secretariat should take a lead, with the support and collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division. The workshop outlined that this is first of this kind in Africa in fifteen years and that such low frequency has negative effects on the overall development of these two areas. Consequently, regional programme should include not only follow-up workshops every 2 years based on the Technical Report on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in SADC countries, which will be prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division as one output of this workshop,

but also establishing a network of experts that will foster exchange of experiences, country visits and exchange of experts.

218. As a part of this network, the Workshop concluded that it would be beneficial for the region to discuss the possibility of laying the foundation for a SADC Association of Civil Registrars and Vital and Health Statisticians that will provide a much-needed venue for professionals to enhance their capacity and to learn from each other.

### ***Compilation of vital statistics at international level***

219. In another illustration of the weak state of availability of vital statistics in the SADC region, the Workshop acknowledged that the level of response to the United Nations Demographic Yearbook, as one of the international statistical data dissemination major instruments, is disappointingly low, except for Mauritius. While the unavailability of data is identified as the main reason for non-reporting to the United Nations, the Workshop pointed to other factors as well, such as lack of resources, primarily human, that prevent submitting data that are otherwise available, as well as gaps in internal coordination in national statistical agencies.

220. Coupled with this, the Workshop recognized the lack of proper communication between countries and international agencies and concluded that establishing permanent linkages or focal points between their national statistical offices and international data collectors is of crucial importance, so that they are able to provide all available data and metadata in a timely manner.

221. In addition, the Workshop strongly emphasized the need to ensure that all the figures provided to international collectors are accompanied by meta-data that clearly outline the methodology used, as well as all the supplementary footnotes and explanations.

### ***Improvement of data on cause of death***

222. The Workshop outlined the importance of information on cause of deaths for policy makers and public health interventions, as well as the importance of civil registration system being the best source for such information. It concluded that there was a big gap for the SADC countries to provide complete and accurate information on cause-of-death information.

223. While acknowledging the fact that collecting, coding and compiling cause of death data are complex and need strong commitment from various stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health, Civil Registration Office and National Statistics Office, the Workshop recommended that as much effort as necessary to be made by various parties involved to improve the completeness and accuracy of data on cause of death.

224. The Workshop emphasized that an indispensable measure to the improvement of the cause of death data is through trainings of medical doctors, registrars and statisticians who are responsible for completing the cause of death information on a death certificate and the coding and compilation of the death records. The Workshop also recommended

that all countries in the region should adopt the 10th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) as it represents an improved and contemporary instrument.

## Annex 1. List of participants

No.	Country / Organization	Contact Person Information
1	Botswana	Ms. Boitumelo Goaletsa KESETSE Statistician II Central Statistics Office Gaborone, Botswana
2		Ms. Cornelia Neo LEPANG Deputy Director Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs/Department of Civil and National Registration Gaborone, Botswana
3	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mr. Belly LUNANGA MWIMA Attaché De Bureau, De 2e Classe Ministère Interieur
4		Mr. Marcel NYUMBAIZA MALUNGU Administrateur Délégué General Institut National de la Statistique Democratic Republic of the Congo
5	Lesotho	Ms. Mathuso Kojang Constance LIKOTI Registrar Births and Births Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship Maseru, Lesotho
6		Ms. Matlokotsi Ivy MAKOA Senior Statistician Bureau of Statistics Maseru, Lesotho
7	Madagascar	Mr. Désiré Christian RABEARISOA RAKOTOMAVO Analyste Principal an Service Statistique Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT) Antananarivo, Madagascar
8		Ms. Marie Simone RALINIRINA Head of Service Civil Status Ministry of Justice Antananarivo, Madagascar
9	Malawi	Ms. Mercy Kanyuka Deputy Commissioner of Statistics National Statistics Office Zomba, Malawi
10		Ms. Mylen MAHOBE Principal Statistician National Statistics Office Zomba, Malawi

No.	Country / Organization	Contact Person Information
11		Chapusa Domino PHIRI Assistant Registrar General Registrar General Department Blantyre, Malawi
12		Mr. Peter CHITEDZE Director National Registration Bureau Europa House Private Bag B318 Lilongwe 3, Malawi
13		Ms. Sophie KANG'OMA Deputy Director National Registration Bureau Europa House Private Bag B318 Lilongwe 3, Malawi
14	Mauritius	Ms. Salima Banon NUNHUCK Statistician Central Statistics Office Life Insurance Corporation of India Centre John Kennedy Street, Port Louis, Mauritius
15		Mr. Roopnarain BUNDHOO Registrar of Civil Status Government of Mauritius Port Louis, Mauritius
16	Namibia	Ms. Pauline Niita ENKONO Chief Statistician Central Bureau of Statistics Windhoek, Namibia
17		Mr. Linus Shiimi NAHOLE Chief Control Officer Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration Windhoek, Namibia
18	South Africa	Ms. Maletela TUOANE-NKHASI Manager: Births and Deaths Statistics South Africa Pretoria, 0001 South Africa
19		Mr. Nthambeleni MUKWEVHO Provincial Executive Manager Statistics South Africa Polokwane, 0699

No.	Country / Organization	Contact Person Information
20		South Africa  Dr. Debbie BRADSHAW Director, Burden of Disease Research Unit Medical Research Council Tygerberg, 7505 South Africa
21	Swaziland	Ms. Thembi O. VILANE Statistician Central Statistical Office Mbabane H100, Swaziland
22		Mr. Anthony MASILELA Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths Mbabane H100, Swaziland
23	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Bakar HAMAD In charge of vital statistics Office of Chief Government Statistician Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Zanzibar United Republic of Tanzania
24		Ms. Mwanamrisho JUMA Acting Planning and Human Resources Officer Registrar General's Office Zanzibar United Republic of Tanzania
25	Zambia	Ms. Margaret TEMBO MWANAMWENGE Principal Statistician Central Statistics Office Lusaka 10101, Zambia
26		Mr. Alick MVULA Senior Registrar National Registration, Passport and Citizenship Headquarters Lusaka 10101 Zambia
27	Zimbabwe	Mr. Tinashe Enock MWADIWA Statistician Central Statistical Office Harare, Zimbabwe
28		Mr. Thomas PASIPAMIRE Director Human Resources and Policy Planning Registrar General's Department Harare, Zimbabwe

No.	Country / Organization	Contact Person Information
29	SADC	Mr. Ackim JERE Senior Policy and Programme Manager – Statistics SADC Secretariat Gaborone, Botswana
30	UN STATISTICS DIVISION	Mr. Srdjan MRKIC Chief Social and Housing Statistics Section Demographic and Social Statistics Branch Statistics Division
31		Ms. Haoyi CHEN Statistician Demographic Statistics Section Demographic and Social Statistics Branch Statistics Division
32		Ms. M. Isabel COBOS Associate Statistician Demographic Statistics Section Demographic and Social Statistics Branch Statistics Division



## Annex 2. Organisation of work

Monday, 1 December 2008	
8:00–8:30	<b>1. Registration of participants</b>
8:30–9:00	<b>2. Opening</b> Introductory remarks by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Malawi</li> <li>- United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)</li> <li>- Southern African Development Community (SADC)</li> </ul> Selection of Chair and Rapporteur Logistics and getting acquainted
9:00–10:00	<b>3. Vital statistics and their sources.</b> The session 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNSD presentation</li> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
10:00–10:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
10:30–12:00	<b>4. The need for a civil registration system.</b> The session 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNSD presentation</li> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:30	<b>Lunch break</b>
13:30 – 15:00	<b>5. Civil registration system and its use for vital statistics.</b> The session 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNSD presentation</li> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
15:00–15:30	<b>Coffee break</b>

15:30 – 16:30	<p><b>6. Integration and coordination in the civil registration and vital statistics system.</b> 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 session 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNSD presentation</li> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
Tuesday, 2 December 2008	
8:30- 10:30	<p><b>7. Cause-of-death data collection through the civil registration system.</b> The session provides an overview of the international standards on the collection of cause of death data through the civil registration system. The session also creates a platform for countries in the region to share good practices in gathering cause of death statistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Africa presentation</li> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
10:30- 11:00	<b>Coffee break</b>
11:00- 12:00	<p><b>8. Evaluating the completeness of the civil registration system.</b> The session reviews techniques, both direct and indirect, that can be used to evaluate the completeness of a civil registration system and reported vital statistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNSD presentation</li> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:30	<b>Lunch break</b>
13:30 – 15:00	<p><b>9. Civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries.</b> The session 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country presentations</li> </ul>
15:00 - 15:30	<b>Coffee break</b>

15:30- 16:30	<p><b>9. Civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries (cont.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday, 3 December 2008</b>	
8:30 – 10:00	<p><b>9. Civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries (cont.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country presentations</li> </ul>
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
10:30– 12:00	<p><b>9. Civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries (cont.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country presentations</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:30	<b>Lunch break</b>
13:30 – 15:00	<p><b>9. Civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries (cont.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country presentations</li> </ul>
15:00 – 15:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
15:30 – 16:30	<p><b>10. Compilation of vital statistics at international level.</b> The session reviews the data and metadata requirements at international level for vital statistics, as indicated on the Demographic Yearbook vital statistics questionnaire. It also assesses how well participating countries are able to comply with the international standard and propose ways to improve both the level of responses and the quality of data provided to the Demographic Yearbook questionnaire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNSD presentation</li> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
16:30 – 17:00	<p><b>11. Provider’s presentation.</b> This session includes a short demonstration of how a web-based registration of birth/death is completed (commercial product and for demonstration purposes only).</p>
<b>Thursday, 4 December 2008</b>	

<b>8:30 – 9:45</b>	<b>12a Group discussion topic 1 - Training and public education.</b> The session will assist the participants in understanding various approaches to training staff and devising public education, information and communication strategies to improve the efficiency of civil registration and vital statistics system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
<b>9:45 – 10:15</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>10:15 – 11:30</b>	<b>12b Group discussion topic 2 – Model civil registration law.</b> The discussion will focus on the similarities and differences between the model law and the existing civil registration law existed in individual countries and identify areas in national civil registration law that needs modification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General discussion</li> </ul>
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<b>12c Report of the group discussions</b>
<b>12:30 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>14:00 - 16:30</b>	<b>13. Visit to the Malawi Department of Registrar General</b>
<b>Friday, 5 December 2008</b>	
<b>9:30 – 10:00</b>	<b>14. Overview of the SADC Statistics work programme</b>
<b>10:00– 12:00</b>	<b>15. Conclusions and Recommendations</b> Presentation and discussion of the summary of the workshop’s proceedings: conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the quality of vital statistics in SADC countries.  <b>Evaluation of the workshop</b> <b>Closing</b>

### **Annex 3. Pre-workshop assignments for civil registrars**

#### **Pre-workshop assignment 1 – Review and assessment of the national civil registration system**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the organizational and technical aspects of the national civil registration system. The questionnaire also assesses the state of the development and methods of evaluation in the civil registration system. Please return the completed questionnaire before **14 November 2008** at the following address by email if possible or by fax:

**Att. Ms. Haoyi Chen**  
**2, UN Plaza DC2-1564**  
**10017 New York, NY, USA**  
**Tel. 1 212 963 4375**  
**Fax. 1 212 963 1940**  
**Email. [chen9@un.org](mailto:chen9@un.org)**

Please provide detailed answers to the questions. When necessary, please attach additional sheets of paper.

Name, title, address and country of official completing this questionnaire:

--

**PART I: LEGAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM**

1. Is there a legal framework providing guidelines concerning how the civil registration system works?

Yes  No

**a. If Yes, please provide us with a copy of the law.**

2. Which of the following best describe the type of civil registration organization currently in operation in your country?

- a national system with a central office to administer the system
- a national system with different governmental departments to administer the registration of vital events
- The country has separate systems of registration in each major administrative division (e.g., province or state level) with a central office at those levels to administer the system)
- Other arrangements (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. At national level, which agency has the primary responsibility for the registration of the vital events:

<b>Vital events</b>	<b>Agency primarily responsible for registration</b>
<b>Live births</b>	
<b>Foetal deaths</b>	
<b>Deaths</b>	
<b>Marriages</b>	
<b>Divorces</b>	

4. Is there a coordination agency or inter-agency coordination committee at national level, for needs and services among different agencies dealing with civil registration?

Yes  No

If Yes, provide the name and main responsibility.

5. Location of the primary registration units? (Check applicable items)

	Births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
a) Municipal offices					
b) Health offices					
c) Revenue offices					
d) Court offices					

e) Parishes/temples					
f) Population registers					
g) Other, specify					

6. Are there secondary registration units in certain hospitals, clinics, or religious places ( e.g., churches, temples) or other public places to supplement the registration network?. Include subsidiary registration places for marriages and divorces.

Yes  No

7. Which of the following perform the functions of the local civil registrars in your country? (Local civil registrars are the persons authorized by law to record vital events and civil status). Check applicable items:

	Births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
a) Appointed civil registrars					
b) Priests, ministers					
c) Court clerks					
d) Notaries					
e) Justices of peace					
f) Teachers					
g) Other, specify					

8. Main duties and responsibilities of the local civil registrars as specified by civil registration law and regulations. Check applicable items.

a. With respect to registration:

- Recording vital and civil status events and safekeeping of the records
- Issuing certified copies of civil registration records
- Celebrating marriages
- Issuing burial permits
- Promotion of registration completeness
- Other, specify:

b. With respect to vital statistics collection and reporting:

- Reporting civil registration data to higher level offices
- Other, specify:

9. Do local civil registrars receive guidance for their work? Check applicable items.

- Copies of current laws and regulations on civil registration
- Updated handbooks or instructions on civil registration

- Handbooks on vital statistics reporting
- In service training
- Direct advice by higher level civil registration authorities through field visits
- Periodical bulletin of information concerning civil registration and vital statistics
- Circulars regarding procedures for civil registration
- Other, specify:

10. Technical supervision to local civil registrars work is provided by: (Check applicable items)

- Registration authorities from the National Agency (field visits from central office staff)
- Regional Registration authorities
- Judicial authorities vested with responsibility for the custody of the records
- The Mayor
- The Priest or Minister
- The local government authority
- Other, specify:

11. Administrative supervision to local civil registrars work is provided by: (Check applicable items)

- Registration authorities from the National Agency (field visits from central office staff)
- Regional Registration authorities
- Judicial authorities vested with responsibility for the custody of the records
- The Mayor
- The Priest or Minister
- The local government authority
- Other, specify

12. Which national agency and ministry are responsible for compiling vital statistics from civil registration?

Agency	
Ministry	

13. By what means are vital events transmitted to the compiling office?



	Individual/collective Pre printed forms	Summary reports	Computer tapes or diskettes	Computer transmission
Live births				
Foetal deaths				
Deaths				
Marriages				
Divorces				

(ATTACH A DATA FLOW CHART)

**PART II: TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM**

Please provide a complete set of forms used for legal and statistical recording of all types of vital events.

**PART III: EVALUATION OF COMPLETENESS AND QUALITY OF THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM**

1. Does the civil registration system cover all segments of the population in the entire country?

Yes       No

If NO, please give a brief description of the coverage:

a) Which geographic areas are not covered? Why?

--

b) Which population groups (ethnic or national groups) are not covered? Why?

--

c) Any other categories that are not covered? Why?

--

2. Indicate if the registration coverage of vital events has been estimated in your country in the past ten years?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

3. If YES for at least one event, indicate the most recent estimate of coverage for each event, the year to which this estimate refers and the method of evaluation used.

a. Level of coverage and year of reference

	Percentage of coverage	Year to which this estimate refers
Live births		
Foetal Deaths		
Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

b. Method of assessment

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Through retrospective questions in population census(es)		Not applicable			
Through a follow up survey					
Through retrospective questions in a single round retrospective survey					
Through a maternity history in a single round retrospective survey				Not applicable	Not applicable
Through a dual-records system					
Other (specify)					

## **Pre-workshop assignment 2**

Please address the following items:

- Does your office compile vital statistics from the civil registration system? If yes, briefly describe what are being compiled.
- What are the factors that hamper the production of vital statistics from civil registration in your country?
- Are there any plans to improve the civil registration and vital statistics system in your country?

Please return the completed report before **14 November 2008** at the following address by email if possible or by fax:

**Att. Ms. Haoyi Chen**  
**2, UN Plaza DC2-1564**  
**10017 New York, NY, USA**  
**Tel. 1 212 963 4375**  
**Fax. 1 212 963 1940**  
**Email. [chen9@un.org](mailto:chen9@un.org)**

## Annex 4. Pre-workshop assignments for statisticians

### Pre-workshop assignment 1 - Review of sources and methods for vital statistics

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the sources and methods for obtaining vital statistics used in your country. Please return the completed questionnaire before **14 November 2008** at the following address by email if possible or by fax:

**Att. Ms. Haoyi Chen**  
**2, UN Plaza DC2-1564**  
**10017 New York, NY, USA**  
**Tel. 1 212 963 4375**  
**Fax. 1 212 963 1940**  
**Email. [chen9@un.org](mailto:chen9@un.org)**

Please provide detailed answers to the questions. When necessary, please attach additional sheets of paper.

Name, title, address and country of official completing this questionnaire:

--

#### PART I: SUMMARY INFORMATION ON VITAL STATISTICS

1. Is there a legal framework defining responsibilities for the collection, processing and dissemination of vital statistics?

Yes       No

a. If Yes, which agency has the primary responsibility for the:

Vital events	Agency primarily responsible for	
	Collection of data	Processing and dissemination of data
Live births		
Foetal deaths		

<b>Deaths</b>		
<b>Marriages</b>		
<b>Divorces</b>		

b. If Yes, please provide us with a copy of the law.

2. Which of the following best describe the type of organizational structure for the collection, processing and dissemination of vital statistics?

- a centralized system at the national level
- a decentralized system in each state or province or any other major division of the country
- The head office of the population register is in charge of the vital statistics
- Other arrangements (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Vital statistics are not compiled

3. Indicate the source(s) of data currently used to obtain vital statistics on:

	Births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
a) Civil registration					
b) Population Censuses					
c) Sample surveys					
d) Dual record system					
e) Other (please specify)					

4. Indicate if current available vital statistics are obtained from multiple data sources, if these statistics are coherent and if not explain why.

5. Please specify the definitions of vital events adopted in your country.

Live birth

--

Foetal death

--

Death

--

Marriage

--

Divorce

--

**PART II: DATA SOURCES IN DETAIL**

**A – Civil registration:**

1. Does a civil registration system exist in your country?

Yes       No

2. If YES, what event does the civil registration register cover?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

If you replied YES to at least one event, please answer to questions 3 to 18, otherwise go to **section B – Sample Surveys**.

3. Which national agency and ministry are responsible for civil registration?

Agency	
Ministry	

4. Is civil registration used as a source for statistics on:

	Fertility	Foetal mortality	Mortality	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

If YES to at least one of the event, please answer to questions 8 to 15, otherwise go to **section B – Sample surveys**.

5. Which national agency and ministry are responsible for compiling vital statistics from civil registration?

Agency	
Ministry	

6. By what means are vital events transmitted to the compiling office?

	Individual/collective Pre printed forms	Summary reports	Computer tapes or diskettes	Computer transmission
Live births				
Foetal deaths				
Deaths				
Marriages				
Divorces				

(ATTACH A DATA FLOW CHART)

7. Are vital rates calculated from civil registration data on vital events?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

If YES,

a. Please indicate the source used for the most recent population estimates used as denominator in the computation of current vital rates:

Continuous population register	
Population census (give year)	
Sample survey (give year)	
Other, specify	

b. Please indicate the technique used for the time adjustment in the population estimate (when the base data is not secured annually by a population register):

Interpolation	
Extrapolation	
Demographic equation	
Other, specify	

8. Indicate if vital statistics are published, their frequency and the title of the last publication containing these statistics?

	Fertility	Foetal mortality	Mortality	Marriages	Divorces
Published					
Frequency					
Title					

9. Are data on vital events tabulated by date of occurrence or/and registration?



	Date of occurrence	Date of registration
Live births		
Foetal deaths		
Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

10. Are data on vital events tabulated by place of occurrence or/and place of registration?

	Place of occurrence	Place of registration
Live births		
Foetal deaths		
Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

11. Is the information on place of usual residence (of mother for births and foetal deaths and of deceased for deaths) registered?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths
Yes			
No			

a. If YES to at least one event, is this information used in the calculation of vital rates?

Yes       No

12. Indicate the level of accuracy of reporting of age of mother in case of Live births and of the deceased in case of Deaths and specify if any study to evaluate the age quality have been carried out.

Age of mother

--

Age of deceased

--

13. List vital statistics obtained from civil registration (use additional sheets if necessary).

--

14. Indicate if the registration coverage of vital events has been estimated in your country in the past ten years?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

15. If YES for at least one event, indicate the most recent estimate of coverage for each event, the year to which this estimate refers and the method of evaluation used.

c. Level of coverage and year of reference

	Percentage of coverage	Year to which this estimate refers
Live births		
Foetal Deaths		
Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

d. Method of assessment

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Through retrospective questions in population census(es)		Not applicable			
Through a follow up survey					
Through retrospective questions in a single round retrospective survey					
Through a maternity history in a single round retrospective survey				Not applicable	Not applicable
Through a dual-records system					
Other (specify)					

**B – Sample surveys:**

1. Have sample surveys been undertaken to obtain fertility and mortality statistics in the last 10 years?

	Fertility	Mortality
Yes		
No		

If YES, please indicate the number of surveys conducted in the last 10 years and provide the following information for the last two surveys.

	Survey 1	Survey 2
2. Title of survey		
3. Date		
4. Coverage:		
a. Geographic areas		
b. Population		
5. Sample fraction percentage:		
6. Type of operation		
a. Single-round survey		
b. Multi-round survey		
c. Sample survey combined with continuous registration (dual record system)		
7. Method of sampling		

8. Is this a specialized survey on fertility and mortality?

Yes  No

If No, what are the other topics covered in the survey?

--

9. Provide a list of fertility and mortality statistics obtained from the surveys:

	Survey 1	Survey 2
<b>Fertility statistics</b>		
<b>Mortality statistics</b>		

10. Have these estimates be evaluated?  Yes  No

a. If Yes, how?

	Survey 1	Survey 2
<b>Fertility statistics</b>		
<b>Mortality statistics</b>		

11. What are the technique(s) used to obtain estimates:

	Survey 1	Survey 2
a. Reverse Survival		
b. Own Children Method		
c. Reconstructed Birth Histories		
d. Children Ever Born		

- e. Recent Births
- f. Birth Histories
- g. Survival of Children ever born
- h. Birth Histories
- i. Recent Household Deaths
- j. Survival of Parents
- k. Survival of Siblings
- l. Others, specify


12. Indicate if age accuracy has been evaluated and which techniques have been used.

<b>Survey 1</b>	
<b>Survey 2</b>	

13. Have results from these surveys been published?

Yes  No

a. If Yes, provide dates the results were published.

	<b>Survey 1</b>	<b>Survey 2</b>
Published dates		

14. Indicate the name of institution responsible for the collection, processing of data and dissemination of results.

<b>Survey 1</b>	
<b>Survey 2</b>	

15. Please provide us the relevant sections of the questionnaires used.

**C - POPULATION CENSUSES:**

1. Have population censuses been used to obtain fertility and mortality estimates?

	Fertility	Mortality
Yes		
No		

If YES, please provide date of latest census used to collect such information and answer questions 2 to 7 below:

	Fertility	Mortality
Census date		

2. Provide a list of fertility and mortality statistics obtained from the census:

**Fertility statistics**

**Mortality statistics**


3. Have these estimates be evaluated?  Yes  No

a. If Yes, how?

**Fertility statistics**

**Mortality statistics**


4. Select the technique(s) used to obtain estimates:

<b>Fertility</b>	<b>Mortality</b>
Reverse Survival	Survival of Children ever born
Own Children Method	Birth Histories
Reconstructed Birth Histories	Recent Household Deaths
Children Ever Born	Survival of Parents
Recent Births	Survival of Siblings
Birth Histories	

5. Indicate if age accuracy has been evaluated and which techniques have been used.

--

6. Have results from the census been published?

Yes  No

a. If Yes, provide dates the results were published.

Published dates

7. Indicate the name of institution responsible for the collection, processing of data and dissemination of results.



8. Please, provide us the relevant sections of the questionnaire.

## **Pre-workshop assignment 2**

Please address the following items:

- Do current available vital statistics satisfy users' needs? If not, explain why.
- What are the factors that hamper the production of vital statistics from civil registration in your country?
- Are there any plans to improve the civil registration and vital statistics system in your country?

Please return the completed report before **14 November 2008** at the following address by email if possible or by fax:

**Att. Ms. Haoyi Chen**  
**2, UN Plaza DC2-1564**  
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