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**THE CURRENT STATUS OF CIVIL REGISTRATION
AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS
IN ZAMBIA**

BY

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I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Zambia is situated in South Central Africa, lying between latitudes 8 and 18 degrees and between longitudes 22 and 34 degrees East. It is a large country with an area of 752,620 square kilometres, most of which forms a plateau lying between 1,000 and 1,600 metres above sea level. The highest parts of the country are in the north-east, with the plateau gradually sloping to the South-west. The country is land locked bordered by Malawi to the East, Mozambique to the South-East, Zimbabwe to the South, Botswana and Namibia to the South-West, Angola to the West, Zaire to the North and Tanzania to the North-East.

The country's sub-tropical climate is characterised by three seasons; the hot dry season from September to October; the rain season from November to April with temperatures ranging from 27°C to 38°C; and a cool dry season from May to August with temperatures ranging from 16°C to 27°C. Mean annual rainfall ranges from 710 mm in the southern parts of the country to 1475mm in the north.

The Zambia vegetation in the plateau is mainly woodlands Savannah consisting of a mixture of trees, tall grass, herbs and other woodlands of deciduous type. This vegetation covers about 80 percent of the country. In the low valley regions, the vegetation is dominated by Mopane trees and short-lived annual grasses.

1.2 The People

The majority of the people in Zambia belong to what is known as the Bantu language family. Most of them have origins to the North in Zaire; but some have East African roots. One group, the Ngoni, migrated from South Africa in the nineteenth century. Remains of the Broken Hill Man were found at Kabwe in 1921 which provided proof that the land was inhabited 30,000 years ago. Proof of a much more sophisticated society that traded with peoples on Africa's east coast is found in the Ing'ombe Ilende civilization that existed in Southern Zambia between the 7th and 10th century A.D. The ancestors of most of today's Zambians had settled in the country by 1800.

The exact number of "tribes" and languages spoken in the country are not exactly known. However, it is generally accepted that there are more than seventy tribes and thirty different dialects in Zambia. There are seven major languages designated as Zambia's national languages. These comprise the Bemba, Kaonde, Lunda, Luvale, Lozi, Tonga and Nyanja. The seven languages are taught in schools and have air time on radio and television. English is the official language in Zambia, a medium of instructions in schools, and a means through which the government conducts its business.

It is estimated that the Bemba and the Tonga people constitute close to 10 percent of the population each, while there are about nine ethnic groups in the 2.5 to 6 percent range

1.3 Political Development

The political integration of modern Zambia dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century with the coming of the group of missionaries. The missionaries exposed the country to the outside world. Of particular importance in the colonisation process was a South African mining magnate, Cecil Rhodes. Cecil Rhodes had persuaded the British Government to grant a charter to his British South African Company (BSAC) in October, 1889. The charter gave the BSAC power to administer the country on behalf of the British Government, while at the same time exploiting the minerals in the country.

The BSAC administered Zambia until 1924 when the British Colonial Office took charge in the running of the affairs of the country. With the opening of several copper mines in the 1920's, European interest in Northern Rhodesia began to grow. Meanwhile across the Southern frontier, Southern Rhodesia had attained settler self rule in 1923. Efforts were directed at amalgamation of the two Rhodesias under one rule though the Northern Rhodesia Africans opposed it. As a means to forestall the political union with South Africa, the British Government agreed in 1953 to constitute the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The rise of nationalism eventually broke up the federation and ushered Northern Rhodesia to political independence in October 24, 1964. The country thereafter has been known as Zambia.

After the first universal adult suffrage in 1964 the United National Independence Party (UNIP) was elected to power with the African National Congress (ANC) as the majority opposition in Parliament. Thereafter UNIP dominated the politics of the country during the multi-party rule until 1972 when a one-party rule was established. This made UNIP a sole legal political party to govern the country. The one party rule came to an end in November, 1991 when multi-party elections were held and elected Movement for Multiparty Democracy to power. UNIP became the sole opposition in Parliament with only 24 out of 150 seats.

Since 1991 the country has experienced the emergence of many opposition parties. Notable among the emerging political parties was the National Party which was formed in 1993 after a number of Ministers and Members of Parliament resigned from the ruling party. The National Party has some few seats in parliament won in the by elections which followed resignations.

Unlike during the period of UNIP when socialism ideology was emphasised, the MMD advocates for liberalisation and privatisation of the economy. Price controls were quickly removed and mechanisms for sale of Government controlled companies were spelt out.

The current government programme is centred on the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) aimed at removing structures in the economy that adversely affect the country's economic performance. Notable on the SAP programme is the Civil Service Reforms which aim at instituting efficiency and productivity in the Civil Service.

1.4 ECONOMY

Traditionally copper has been Zambia's main economic activity. Copper accounted for 95 percent of export earnings and contributed about 45 percent of Government revenue during the decade following attainment of political independence (1964-1975). This situation drastically changed due to decline in world copper prices in the mid 1970s. Copper prices began rising in 1978 only to fall sharply again in 1981/82.

The fall in copper prices, coupled with rising oil prices, slowed the pace of industrialisation and heavy dependence on imports put the country's economy under serious pressure.

In 1989, the GDP grew by 0.1 percent as compared to 6.3 percent in 1968. Real output declined by an average of about 1.0 percent annually between 1989 and 1991, with the decline amounting to 1.8 percent on one hand. Real per capita gross domestic product, on the other hand, declined by an average of 1.6 percent per annum between 1984 and 1990.

The labour force grew from 2.7 million in 1986 to 3.2 million in 1991. In 1993 the labour force was estimated to be 3.5 million. The number of employed persons did not grow with same magnitude, it grew by only 150,000 between 1986 and 1991. The formal sector employment over the period 1986-93 showed a steady decline, some industries show a significant increase while others showed some decrease. Generally, there have been a fall in the informal sector employment due to retrenchment of workers in many quasi government establishments.

Acute shortage of foreign exchange remained a major constraint in the development of the economy in spite of attractive copper prices in 1989 mainly due to reduced volume of copper sales associated with difficulties in production and transportation. The development of non-traditional exports remained below expectations.

The government's policy of liberalisation of trade, prices and foreign exchange have subsequently stabilised the prices and the Kwacha against foreign currencies. Since early 1992 inflation has declined and it has continued to do so. The full impact of the recent changes in the economy will only be felt in the long run and with the use of a specialised survey.

Privatisation of most parastatal companies has not yet showed its full impact in the economy in terms of structure of employment and international trade. Again a survey may be opted for to assess the performance of the economy in this respect.

The contribution of the Agriculture sector to GDP increased from 15.2 percent in 1980 to 18% in 1991 at constant 1977 market prices. The contribution of agriculture to GDP at current prices increased from 14.2% to 15.7, during the same period. Table 1 gives a snapshot of some of the economic indicators.

Table 1: Selected Indicators

Item								
Year	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Population (millions)	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.8	8.0
Labour Force ('000) LF	2.7					3.2		3.5
Employed LF	2.4					2.5		
Unemployment %	13					22		
Formal Employment	531.3	535.6	539.3	546.5	549.5	551.1	546.0	520.0
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	1986	1987	1988	1991	1990	1991	1992	1993
at current prices (K'million)	12,963	19,779	30,021	60,025	113,341	203,920		
at 1977 prices (K'million)	2,059	2,114	2,247	2,224	2,214	2,174		
Per capita GDP								
at current prices (K)	1,865	2,909	4,289	8,337	15,316	26,834		
at 1977 prices(K)	312	311	321	309	299	286		
Real GDP growth (%)	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94
	2.7	6.3	-1.0	-0.4	-1.8			
Sectorial contribution to GDP	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Agricultural sector (1977 prices) K'million	373.8	365.6	436.2	424.5	386.7	406.7		
Mining & quarrying K'million	176.5	184.2	160.4	175.6	162.7	165.5		
Manufacturing K'million	425.3	462.9	547.0	544.1	586.7	524.3		
Gross fixed capital formation								
at current prices (K'million)	1386	1931	2381	3643	1527	20292		
at 1977 prices (K'million)	167	159	178	123	130	168		
Increase in index of consumer prices (%)	54.8	47.0	54.0	128.3	109.6	93.4		
Index of consumer prices (1985=100) (1975=weights)	154.8	227.6	350.6	800.3	1677.1	3243.0		
Copper								
Production('000 tonnes)	459.7	483.1	422.2	450.8	426.2	398.4		

Table 1: Selected Indicators

Item								
Year	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Export ('000 tonnes)	436.3	475.8	398.2	431.5	441.2	376.5		
Prices per ton (K) (LME cash & settlement Price)	10,700	16,172.2	21,599.3	33,748.9	82,056.5	150,806.9		
Index of Production (1980=100)								
Mineral Production	85.6	83.6	80.6	82.6	79.0	72.0		
Manufacturing	110.9	112.5	118.9	118.4	125.1	111.3		
Electricity	106.4	91.3	90.7	73.1	84.3	94.2		
International trade	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Value of imports (K'million)	2133	4448	6627	6898	12601	36554		
Total Exports (K'million)	1508.2	5366.5	8058.7	9786.2	18434.0	39143.0		
Balance of trade (export surplus) (K'million)	-625	919	1431	2888	5834	2589		

II. DEMOGRAPHY

Zambia has had three comprehensive censuses since Independence in 1964. The three census conducted in 1969, 1980 and 1990 together with several survey provide a rich source of demographic data for Zambia.

Population Size Distribution and Growth

Zambia' population has grown from 4.1 million in 1969, 5.7 million in 1980 to 7.4 million in 1990. In 1994, the population of Zambia is estimated to be 8.3 million. Compared with the country's area of 753,614 square kilometres, Zambia still has low population density compared to many African countries. The population densities for the whole country were recorded as 5.6 in 1969, 7.8 in 1980 and 10.2 persons per square kilometre in 1990. The distribution of the population is very uneven across the nine provinces with densities ranging from 3.1 in North Western province to 45.6 persons per square kilometre in the Copperbelt Province in 1990. (See Table 2). The bulk of the Zambia's population is found along the old-line-of-Rail from the Southern tip of the country to the Copperbelt Province. About one-third of the population lives in the Copperbelt and Lusaka Provinces. However, the combined area of the two provinces comprises only about 7 percent of the country's area. The population growth rate of Zambia was estimated to be 3.1 percent per year between 1969/1980. However, the growth rate fell to 2.7 percent per year during the decade 1980/1990. Differences between the provinces have existed in the population growth rates. Between 1969 and 1980, the populations of Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces grew at the rate of 6.3 and 4.0 percent per year respectively. Other provinces except the Central Province had their annual population growth rates below the national average during the 1969/1980 decade. Between 1980 and 1990, the provincial growth rate patterns changed with Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces recording lower growth rates than the previous decade. The decline, particularly in the Copperbelt province was due to a decline in the mining activities in the province. Four provinces namely, Central, Eastern, Lusaka and Southern grew at the rates above the national growth rate between 1980 and 1990. It should be noted that the four provinces rank high in the agriculture production. It is likely, the Copperbelt province experienced an outflow of the population between 1980 and 1990.

Table 2

Population, Area, Density, Percentage Distribution and Annual Growth Rate by Province, 1969, 1980 and 1990

Province	Population			Area (Sq. Km)	Density			Percentage Distribution			Growth Rate (%)	
	1969	1980	1990		1969	1980	1990	1969	1980	1990	1969-80	1980-90
Central	358,655	511,905	720,627	94,394	3.8	5.4	7.6	8.8	9.0	9.8	3.3	3.5
Copperbelt	816,309	1,251,178	1,427,528	31,328	26.1	39.9	45.6	20.1	22.1	19.3	4.0	1.3
Eastern	509,515	650,902	965,967	69,106	7.4	9.4	14.0	12.6	11.5	13.1	2.3	4.0
Lusapula	335,584	420,966	525,160	50,567	6.6	8.3	10.4	8.3	7.4	7.1	2.1	2.2
Lusaka	353,975	691,054	987,102	21,896	16.2	31.7	45.1	8.7	12.2	13.4	6.3	3.6
Northern	545,096	674,750	855,177	147,826	3.7	4.6	5.8	13.5	11.9	11.6	2.0	2.4
North-Western	231,733	302,668	387,468	125,826	1.8	2.4	3.1	5.7	5.4	5.2	2.5	2.5
Southern	496,041	671,923	907,150	85,283	5.8	7.9	10.6	12.2	11.9	12.3	2.8	3.0
Western	410,087	486,455	606,813	126,386	3.3	3.9	4.8	10.1	8.6	8.2	1.6	2.2
Zambia Total	4,056,995	5,661,801	7,382,992	725,612	5.6	7.8	10.2	100.0	100.0	100.0	3.1	2.7

Source: CSO (1973): 1969 Census of population and housing; CSO (1985): 1980 Census of Population and housing, Final report Volume II; CSO (1985): 1980 Census of Population and Housing; General Population and Migration Tables, Volume I. CSO 1990 Census

Since Independence in 1964, there have been almost continuous migration of people to mining towns in the Copperbelt province and other urban centres. Consequently, the proportion of the population living in urban areas has increased steadily from 29 percent in 1969 to almost 40 percent in 1990. In recent years however rural to urban migration has greatly declined and in some cases there could have been return migration. The proportion of the urban population varied among the provinces from 91 percent in Copperbelt Province to 9 percent in the Eastern Province.

The urban population grew at an alarming rates during the first two decades after independence. Between 1963 and 1969, the urban population grew at an annual rate of 8.9 percent compared to the rural population that grew at 0.5 percent per year. During the decade 1969-1980 the urban population growth rate had declined to 5.8 percent per year but still higher than the rural growth rate of 1.6 percent per year. In the previous decade (1980 to 1990) the urban growth rate had slowed down to 2.6 per cent per year while that of the rural population had accelerated to 2.8 percent per annum. Thus the speed of migration to the urban areas slowed down considerably during the 1980-90 period. Perhaps the growth rate observed in the urban areas could largely be attributed to the natural increase. Further analysis of the 1990 Census data could provide firm answers on the nature of recent internal migration pattern in Zambia

Demographic Characteristics

The population of Zambia has remained very youthful with slightly over 45 percent being children aged 14 years and below in 1990. The population in the age group 15-64 comprise 52 percent of the total population while the remaining 3 percent is made up of persons aged 65 years and above. The age structure as described here has remained the same for nearly three decades, implying that there is great potential for further population growth for a long period ahead. Furthermore, Zambia will have to strain her economy to maintain the ever increasing numbers of youths by providing appropriate social services.

The dependency ratio between 1969 and 1990 has fluctuated between 92 and 107 per 100 population. According to the Demographic and Labour-force survey of 1986, there were 2.7 million persons in the labour force and by 1994 the labour force had grown to an estimated 3.6 million or 43 percent of the total population.

Table 3 below provides some demographic indicators for Zambia for the various selected years.

Table 3 Summary of the Demographic profile for Zambia, for selected years

	1969	1980	1990
Population enumerated (million)	4.06	5.66	7.38
Urban population (%)	29.4	39.9	39.4
Population in large urban areas (More than 50,000 inhabitants - %)	27.6	30.7	28.2
Rural Population (%)	70.6	60.1	60.6
Sex ratio (Males per 100 females)	96.0	96.0	96.1
Total Fertility Rate - TFR	6.9	7.2	6.7
Gross Reproduction Rate - GRR	3.4	3.4	3.3
Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1000 live births)	141	97	90
Child Population (0-14%)	46.3	49.0	45.3

Child Dependency Ratio (Per 100 population)	90.0	101.5	87.2
Dependency Ratio (Per 100 population)	94.3	101.2	92.1
Population Density (Persons per Sq. Km)	5.3	7.5	9.8
Average household size total	4.7	5.0	5.6
Female headed households (%)	23.8	27.7	16.9
Completed family size (women age 40-49)	5.1	6.7	N/A
	1969	1979-84	1985-90
Crude Birth Rate-CBR (Per 1000 Population)	47.7	48.0	49.7
Crude Death Rate-CDR (Per 1000 Population)	19.7	17.0	13.2
Life expectancy at Birth Total	43.4	48.3	54.0
Male	41.8	46.7	53.0
Female	45.0	50.0	55.0
	1963-69	1969-80	1980-90
Growth Rate (r) (%) Total population	2.5	3.0	2.7
Urban population	8.9	5.8	2.6
Rural population	0.5	1.6	2.8

Source: Central Statistical Office, Selected Socio-Economic Indicators, 1992

Population and Family Planning Policies and Programmes

For the first decade and a half after independence, Zambia did not view her high rate of population growth as a development problem. The only concern then was with the high rate of migration from rural to urban areas and uneven spatial distribution of the population. The results of the 1980 Population and Housing Census exposed the rapidity with which the population was expanding and the implied

adverse effect on development and individual welfare. This led to government reappraisal of the perceptions of the rôle of population in national development efforts. The government realised that the nation's development planning and plan implementation processes should not only aim at accommodating the increased demands for goods and services brought about by population growth, but should also aim at influencing those aspects of the country's sociocultural life that underpin high levels of reproduction and thus of population growth.

In 1984, the National Commission for Development Planning (NCDP) - now the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation - was given a mandate to initiate a draft population policy which would aim at achieving a population growth rate consistent with the growth rate of the economy. The National Population Policy was formally launched by the President in May 1980. The ultimate objective of the policy is to improve the standard of living and quality of life of all Zambians. The immediate objectives of the policy are to:

- i) Initiate, improve and sustain measures aimed at slowing down the nation's high population growth rate;
- ii) Enhance the people's health and welfare and prevent premature death and illness especially among mothers and children;
- iii) Systematically integrate population factors into the nation's development planning and the plan implementation processes;
- iv) Ensure that all couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so;
- v) Achieve a more even distribution of the population between urban and rural areas and to regulate international migrations;
- vi) Expand and maintain the nation's population database.

The main targets of the national population policy are to:

- i) Reduce the rate of population growth from 3.7 percent per annum in 1989 to 3.4 percent per annum by the year 2000 and to 2.5 percent per annum by the year 2015;
- ii) Reduce the total fertility rate from 7.2 to 6 by the 2000 and 4 by the year 2015;
- iii) Reduce the infant mortality rate from 97 per 1000 live births to 65 per 1000 live births by the year 2000 and to 50 by the year 2015;
- iv) Make family planning services available, accessible and affordable by at least 30 percent of all adults in need of such services by the year 2000.

The strategies for implementing the policy are predicated on the voluntary acceptance of family planning methods in accordance with fundamental human rights. The main strategies include:

- i) Formulating and implementing fertility regulation and family planning programmes within the context of the nation's health care and related systems;
- ii) Providing necessary information and education on the value of a small family and the nation as a whole in achieving self-reliance;
- iii) Intensifying the primary health care programme especially maternal and child health care, so as to reduce the levels of infant, child and maternal morbidity and mortality;
- iv) Improving the status of women through the removal of various social, legal, administrative and cultural barriers to their effective participation in national affairs in order to enhance their participation in national development efforts and as a way of ensuring demographic transition from high to low population growth rates (National Commission of Development Planning, n.d.).

Non-governmental agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) through its Zambian affiliate - the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ) - and the Family Life Movement of Zambia (FLMAZ) provide material, financial and technical assistance and operate family planning clinics, supplementing the efforts of the Ministry of Health (MOH).

The vigorous family planning campaigns in Zambia has had limited success. The results of Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 1992 shows that contraceptive knowledge is nearly universal. Over 90 percent of married women reported knowledge of at least one modern contraceptive method such as the pill, condom and female sterilisation. However only less than half of the currently married women have used a contraceptive method at some time and only 15 percent were using any method at the time of the survey.

The revelation that very few married women were currently using contraceptive method could be a pointer of limited success of family planning campaign despite the universality of knowledge. Thus slowing down of population increase in Zambia may not be attained soon.

III. THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM IN ZAMBIA

1. LEGAL FRAME OF THE SYSTEM:

The European, Aliens and Coloured births and deaths registration Act of 12th June, 1898 was the first legislation. Later amendments were made to the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Cap.210) and the notification of the Births of the Children of Africans (Cap.215). In 1973, this legislation was replaced by the Births and Deaths Registration Act No. 21. Monogamous marriages are registered under the provisions of the marriage Act (Cap.211). Cap.210 of 1973 states that: "Every live births or still birth, as well as every death occurring throughout Zambia on or after March, 1973 is registrable under the Births and Deaths Registration Acts: 210

By virtue of section 5 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1973, the Civil registration in Zambia is compulsory. The same Act provides for the appointment of registration officers and empowers the Minister of Home Affairs to make such rules as may be necessary to implement the Act.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

There are presently 1,772 gazetted sub-centres registration offices in addition to 58 District Executive Secretaries at Bomas (District Headquarters) who are the agents of the Registrar General; that is, they are the District Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

3. PROCEDURES FOR REGISTRATION:

At each registration sub-centre, when an event is reported the appropriate notice of birth, notice of death or notice of birth of a still born child is completed by the informant with help, if needed, by the assistant registration officer. The completed forms are sent to the District Registrar (the District Secretary) who after recording the event in the appropriate register sends the form to the office of the Principal Registrar of Births, deaths and Marriages (at the Registrar General's office in Lusaka).

3(a) Methods of Recording

District Files are maintained by numbering in sequence annually and these are checked in the Registrar General's Office to ensure no entries have been missed. There are also loose leaf forms together with a statistical card which are filled in by the applicant. The loose leaf forms together with the card go to the Registrar for the processing of the certificate. After the processing of the certificate the card is then sent to Central Statistical Office for their statistical collection. All these forms are supposed to be filled in ink. (samples of vital records currently in use in the country are here included).

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The District Secretary requisitions for the forms, registers and stationery for the sub-registration centres in the District. Birth and Death forms are available from the Registrar General's Office while marriage forms are provided by the Government Printing Department. When a court makes an adoption order a relevant entry is made in the "Adopted Children Register" maintained in each province. Indexes are prepared at the Registrar General's Office.

3(b) Place of Registration of Vital Events:

All these vital events are registered by place of occurrence. It must be however be stated that divorces are not registered even though divorce grants are done in court except those marriages which took place in church. Births and Deaths are registered

at sub-centres, i.e., at schools and Bemas (with Head teachers and District Secretaries respectively) as registrars. These Head teachers are designated as the assistant registration officers while District Secretaries are designated as the District Registrars.

3(c) Time Allowance for Registration:

Registration fee within 30 days is not K500-00 (Five Hundred Kwacha) even though it has been free all along until recently (this year in fact); this was when these fees were revised because the Government Printing department which is the sole supplier of all our forms, registers and stationery introduced a printing fee for any form printed whether Government or not. Therefore, there has not been any fixed time for anyone to register a vital event in the country apart from the fees mentioned under item 3(f) below.

3(d) Registration Fee:

As mentioned above the registration fee has just been introduced. It is not yet known whether the introduction of registration fee will contribute to the low registration. But, it is important to mention that even when this fee was not there, people were not registering these events.

3(e) Other Requirements:

The only other requirements needed by the Registration Office when registering an event are a birth record form from the hospital (in case of a birth) and a death report from a qualified coroner and a National Registration Card for the informant. Burial permits are issued by District Secretaries before a burial is permitted in controlled cemeteries, and only after the presentation of a medical certificate of cause of death by a registered medical practitioner or a post mortem certificate. While this is an effective means of control in urban areas it is not so in the more remote rural areas.

3(f) Late Registration Procedures:

There is a payment of K750-00 (Seven Hundred and fifty Kwacha) for an event which was not reported within 12 months of occurrence. After 12 months an affidavit together with supporting documentary evidence is required to be submitted to the Registrar General before authority is given to register the event. All Applications for Births and Deaths Certificates are sent to the Registrar General's Office, with the appropriate fee. The completed certificates are sent to the applicant or informant as the case may be.

There are no penalties on culprits for non-registering of an event. The policy on this

matter is very relaxed.

- 3(g) The question of duplication in Zambia can not occur except when an informant sees that it has taken time for his/her certificate to come that he/she may decide to fill in another form when in actual fact the first is being processed.

Finally, every endeavour has been made since the passing of the current legislation to educate people as to the requirements of the Act and the need for vital events to be notified and recorded at the time they occur. Posters were prepared and distributed widely through Districts, Schools and Clinics, radio broadcasting was used as well as a publicity campaign through other government agencies by the Registrar General. This publicity however needs revitalising.

4. **THE LOCAL REGISTRARS:**

- (a) As mentioned earlier on, sub-registration centres are manned by Head teachers at schools, court clerks or a local nurse at a Rural Health Centre. When the Head teacher or other incumbent is replaced the new appointee assumes the position of registration officer. They are responsible for the registration of Births and deaths only. The District Secretary at each Boma is the only officer authorised to issue marriage licences and conduct registrant's marriages.

(b) **Type of Appointment:**

All Local registrars are Head teachers of local schools who are civil Servants employed by the Government. Thus, their appointment as local registration officers goes with their appointment as Head teachers by their Ministry (Education). There are no training programs attached or addressed to their appointments apart from a few hours briefing by the District Registrar (District Secretary) who is equally appointed by a different Ministry (Local Government.)

(c) **Fulltime or Part-time Registrars:**

These are part-time duties. Local registration officers are teachers by profession employed by the Ministry of Education while District Registrars are civil servants employed by the Ministry of Local Government.

(d) **Training and Suitability for the Post:**

The average years of education for both registrars and assistant registrars (as of now) is 12 or more years of school education. Of late there has not been any training programmes for civil registrars.

(e) **Remuneration:**

These local registrars are paid a token allowance of only K100-00 per month. This has made registration in sub-centres completely come to a stand still because these registrars have complained that the token allowance was too little and therefore vowed not to carry out the duty; since they can not do this work for free.

5. THE INFORMANT:

As stated earlier, by virtue of section 5 of the births and deaths Registration Act, 1973, the civil registration in Zambia is compulsory. The law provides for the particulars in the civil registers to be recorded either on the information of a qualified informant, or (in case of a death) there has been an inquest, from a coroner's certificate. Thus, in case of a birth the informant is supposed to be the father or mother of that child, while an informant in case of a death is a close relative of the deceased (in some case could be the Administrator of the Deceased's Estates); and the couples in the presence of close relatives from both sides are the informants in case of marriages. It has also been found out that by using the above mentioned informants the quality of data becomes very dependable.

6. CIVIL REGISTRATION ARCHIVES:

(a) The Local Civil Registration Archives:-

(i) The arrangement of civil registration records:

At the local level registration records are kept in books or registers. These are kept in the headmaster's office at the school. These are kept in the headmaster's office at the local school. They are recorded into the registers as they come and no alphabetical order is followed. The local registration officer is responsible for the safe custody of these books. They are kept in these offices at the registrar's risk because most of these local registration offices are grass thatched offices and are fire risks but have to be protected from these hazards of aging, climate, fire, etc. In most cases, these offices are only used by the head teachers only and are isolated from the public.

(ii) Provisions to safeguard confidentiality of the information in vital records:

No one apart from registrars are allowed to go through or touch these registers. Registrars are required by law to take an oath of secrecy to handle information on these vital records.

(b) The Central Archive of Civil Registration:-

At the moment, the safe keeping of civil registration records is very bad and is in shambles. These records needs to be computerised or else the department will loose vital information from the registers. Already, some of the registers have their pages falling out and become very difficult to get the information in certain cases. Right now, some records are not filed because

of lack of folders, and some registers are mixed up because of lack of shelves to keep the records from. There isn't enough space to keep all these records at the moment. These records can not be disposed off because of their importance and they are for future use/reference.

Therefore, there is a need that apart from registers and the related documents, these records need to be computerised (like the British Registration system). Also these records need to be decentralised, thus, having registers and computers in each district, at Provincial level and at the Headquarters (Registrar General's office in Lusaka) to keep the Archives.

7. ASSESSMENT OF THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM:

It must be stressed that not all vital events are recorded as some people do not register these vital events. The civil registration System in Zambia is supposed to be compulsory but has eventually turned out to be voluntary.

Whilst the legal aspects are there, the problem lies with bureaucratic way of processing the events. The chain of command seems to be too long and need to be decentralised up to district level only. The population as of now does not seem to know the use of registering a vital event. The system really needs significant improvement. Field work at times is taken to District Headquarters only because of lack of transport to rural areas and these are only done to check on registers and listen to problems encountered by District registrars. These in turn do not go to assistant registrars due to lack of transport. After these tours reports on problems being faced by registration officers have been written but the economic situation of the country can not allow for the total overhaul and revamping of the civil registration in Zambia. Field work in this aspect is very important for officers to publicise, distribute and even organise workshops/seminars for the public, etc.

It must also be mentioned that the coverage of civil events is under 80% which indeed requires major improvements. This has been found after comparisons made with Census figures. Factors hampering full coverage of civil registration are many but to mention only a few are:

- (a) Lack of publicity;
- (b) Most of the population is ignorant of the importance to register these events;
- (c) The law is not very strict on those who do not register these events;
- (d) Lack of transport for registration officers to tour and visit even remote areas.
- (e) Informants get tired of waiting for their certificates because of delays in processing them due to lack of enough manpower at the civil registration Headquarters.
- (f) These events are worked on manually, and this causes a lot of delays when compounded with lack of enough manpower.

8. USES OF REGISTRATION RECORDS:

It must be emphasised that the uses of registration records are enormous. The

improvement of their coverage is of great beneficial to the socio-economic planning, eg., planning for social services, insurance policies, housing policies, etc., in the country.

(a) **Uses of registration records by individuals:**

As it has been pointed out already, the uses of these records by individuals stem from having birth and marriage certificates to deaths certificates used for getting terminal benefits at financial institutions. Birth certificates, for example are used for entry into school and when an individual attains the age of 16 is easy for one to get a National Registration Card; and even have a passport. Marriage certificates used to be a compulsory thing for workers who wanted to be given housing allowance. However, this is now no longer a compulsory thing since Government scrapped this allowance.

- (b) It is an administrative arrangement that for one to get a deceased's terminal benefits the informant has to produce a death certificate. Mainly, it is for this reason that informants get these certificates, informants don't see it important to have a birth certificate when entering into school because they can even use an affidavit.

IV The National Vital Statistics System

1. The Legal Frame of the System

Vital statistics system in Zambia started in the colonial period. Though scanty in nature during the British Colonial rule, it helped the rulers in identifying people residing in various localities for tax purposes. Vital statistics played very little role in monitoring the demographic trends in the then Norther Rhodesia.

In 1973, an Act of Parliament was issued under Chapter 210 of the Laws of Zambia. According to this law, it is mandatory in Zambia to register births, deaths and marriages occurring in households. However, the act is limited, in its coverage of vital events as it confines itself to births, deaths and marriages only. Chapter 425 of the Laws of Zambia allows the Central Statistical Office to collect, process and disseminate any statistical information.

2. Administrative arrangements of the System

The Central Statistical Office (CSO) collects vital statistics pertaining to births, deaths and marriages from the cards administered by Registration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Population and Demography Division of the CSO codes the vital statistics cards. The coded information is then passed on to the Data Processing Unit of the CSO for Computer processing. Computer print-outs in tabular form are produced which are used for making tables for the vital statistics report. The reports are usually priced and

published for the interested users.

3. Procedures of reporting and monitoring

Even though it is by law that vital events of births, deaths and marriages should be reported, this is not enforced since the systems operates along voluntary lines. It is up to households to go forward to the District Councils (which acts as registration centres) to register vital events.

Vital events are registered by District Registrars at district councils for household members who report. These records are forwarded to National Registration Department Headquarters in Lusaka.

4. Procedures of Statistical Processing (the compilation of tabulation plan)

Three cards are available for the registration of vital events and subsequently extraction of Vital Statistics. The three cards shown in the appendix are;

(a) Form 1 - Marriages:

Marriages are recorded on Vital Statistics Form 1 and seeks information on the following:

- (i) Date of registration of marriage and the actual date when the marriage took place.
- (ii) Marriage details comprising the names of wife and husband, the race and age of couple. Also collected is the occupation of the couple and whether the marriage is the first or not.
- (iii) The place where the marriage took place i.e. Province, District, Town and whether the marriage came through the Church or the registrar of marriages.

(b) Form 2 - Births

The information sought on this form comprise;

- (i) the date, race, sex and place of birth of the child
- (ii) mother's details i.e. number of previous children born alive, place of residence and age of the mother.
- (iii) Circumstances of birth i.e. whether birth occurred in hospital/clinic/rural health centre; home attended by trained medical personnel, at home not attended by trained medical personnel or any other stated circumstances of birth.

(c) Form III - Deaths

The following information is recorded on this form:

- (i) Date of registration and death;
- (ii) Age, sex, race, marital status and occupation of the decedent
- (iii) Place and circumstances of death (like birth)

The three forms described above are official and within the legal framework of registration of the vital events. Due to limited response from the registration centres the Central Statistical Office has attempted to collect information on births and deaths direct from health institutions.

Two forms have been designed and are shown in the appendix. The results extracted from the two forms are termed "Unregistered Vital Statistics." This is because the two forms cannot be used for registration of either birth or death by the Registrar General's Office.

Coded data from vital statistics cards is entered into computers by the Data Processing Unit of CSO. The outcome is computer print-outs which are in tabular form. Detection of errors in the data is done using a CONCOR computer program. The errors are corrected and fresh computer print-outs made.

5. Publication and dissemination of vital statistics

Computer print-outs from the Data Processing Unit are used to make tables for the vital statistics report. This publication, however is not disseminated to the public because of the extremely low coverage of the vital statistics system in Zambia. The vital statistics reports are stocked by the CSO Library and Publications Section.

Up to early 1980's Vital Statistics registered births, marriages and deaths reports were compiled and published. In spite of low coverage, the tables produced were detailed and adequate which would have provided useful information.

In all there were seven tables extracted from the information provided on the cards. These were;

- (i) Summary table showing yearly time series registered number of birth and deaths for Africans and non-Africans.
- (ii) A table showing time series of births by province
- (iii) Time series table showing births classified by age of mother, number of children living and race.
- (iv) Marriages by ethnic group and year (time series)
- (v) Time series of deaths by province

(vi) Time series of deaths by age, sex and ethnic group.

(vii) Deaths classified by cause and sex (excluding infants) and infant mortality death by cause.

The publication was discontinued due to very low response rates. For example in 1983 for the whole of Zambia only 20,896 births, 5,95 deaths and 829 marriages were reported in a population of about 6 million people characterised by high mortality and fertility rates.

6. Assessment of vital statistics system

The vital statistics system coverage in Zambia is very low. The number of registration centres (district councils) are few resulting into long distances for those who may wish to register. The National Registration Department, which is mandated to register vital events is facing problems of transport and inadequate manpower and funding.

There is need to increase the number of registration centres to include all health units so that births and deaths are automatically registered as they occur. There is also need to insist on birth, death and marriage certificates in administrative procedure to create a need for them and thus a need for registering these vital events.

7. Uses of vital statistics

Uses of vital statistics can never be over-emphasised and are varied, among which the prominent ones are:-

- (i) Census coverage error detection
- (ii) Planning for social services
- (iii) Insurance (Actuarial - Life tables)
- (iv) Housing - using information on marriages to determine rate of family formation and thus need for housing.

As described above, the vital statistics collected in Zambia are of little use. Since the coverage is very low. Further some vital events are never collected. These include divorces, separations and internal movements of people. Vital statistics in Zambia is only confined to birth, deaths and marriages.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

For any compulsory registration system to be fully effective there is a need to:

- (a) educate the people at large by means of a continuing publicity campaign, as to the important part they must play in the notification of births and deaths as they occur,
- (b) train officers as registration officers and provide an established structure as

a prospective career together with up-to-date training facilities,

- (c) provide a correct "chain of command" so that registration officers at whatever level of responsibility, are responsible directly to the Registrar-General and not as at present, being registration officers responsible in the first instance to another Ministry of Government,
- (d) revise, reveal and if need be amend, the present system of civil registration to ensure accurate, complete and up-to-date data is recorded and available as an essential ingredient for government planning.
- (e) revise the civil registration system to remove delays and duplication of effort and recording to ensure that a speedier service can be rendered to Government and applicants alike.
- (f) establish a "National Co-ordinating Committee" on civil Registration and Vital Statistics to supervise and co-ordinate the co-operation which is necessary between all ministries involved in a Civil Registration and vital statistics system.
- (g) establish facilities within and co-operation with the Central Statistical Office to provide up-to-date vital and morbidity statistical tables.

Also, the following problems being faced by the Registration Department should be solved for the civil registration to be meaningful. The problems being faced are:

- (i) shortage of manpower
- (ii) the notices as usual are delayed at sub-centres before they are finally forwarded to the Headquarters for issuance of certificates. The reasons for the delay being lack of transport. Due to delayed processing of certificates
- (iii) there are at times changes in addresses of informants and hence this comes to certificates being returned to Headquarters or to the Town Clerk where the registration event was first registered.
- (iv) supply of registration materials is done by the Government Printer on request: unfortunately, he does not fulfil our requirements and as a result, there are always shortages of materials needed in districts. It must be noted that it is only the registrar General's Office that supply materials to rural or registration centres in the country.
- (v) transport for tours in provinces and districts is supposed to be provided for seminars, workshops and meetings for registration officers and the public alike.
- (vi) develop a system of incentive-provision to the field workers or data

collection staff.

It must finally be mentioned that even though civil registration is supposed to be compulsory, it has now turned out to be voluntary because:

- (a) even though the law to enforce the civil registration is there it is not harsh for people to fear.
- (b) government agencies like schools, National Provident Fund etc. who by law need to request for birth certificates at a child's entry into school and for a death certificate for one to get a deceased's benefits respectively, do not actually enforce such rules. Children just go into school without this law requirement.

APPENDICIES

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
VITAL STATISTICS-FORM 1 MARRIAGES**

M	NUMBER OF ENTRY IN REGISTER	DATE OF REGISTRATION			DATE OF MARRIAGE		
		Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year

DETAILS OF MARRIAGE

	Name	R a c e				Age	Whether First Marriage (Yes/No)	Occupation
		African	European	Asian	Coloured or Mixed			
Husband								
Wife								

PLACE OF MARRIAGE

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	TOWN	REGISTRAR	CHURCH

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Vital Statistics Form 2

Births, 19.....

Number of entry In register.....	Date of birth	Day	Month	Year

DETAILS OF CHILD

PLACE OF BIRTH

NAME	RACE (Put X in relevant space)				Sex (M/F)	Town (Where applicable)	District	Province
	African	European	Asian	Coloured or Mixed race				

DETAILS OF MOTHER

AGE	Number of Children previously born alive			Usually Place of Residence		
	Still Living	Now dead	Total	Town (where applicable)	District	Province

CIRCUMSTANCES OF BIRTH (Put X in relevant space)

In hospital/clinic/rural health centre	At home attended by trained medical personnel	At home not attended trained medical personnel	Other (Specify)

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
VITAL STATISTICS-FORM III DEATHS**

D	Number of Entry in Register	Date of Registration			Date of death		
		Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year

DETAILS OF DECEDENT

				Sex								Occupation
African	European	Asian	Coloured or Mixed		Year	Month	Day	Single	Married	Windowed	Divorced	

Place of Death			Circumstances of Death				Causes of Death	
Province	District	Town	Hospital/Clinic /Rural Health Centre	Home Attended	Home not Attended	Other	Direct	
							Antecedent	
Usual Place of Residence							Other Significant Conditions	
							Statistical Classification	