



UN Legal Identity Agenda - ID4Africa 2019 Toolkit: Legal Identity for All

WHAT IS ID4AFRICA?

ID4Africa is an “ID-4-All movement” aiming to help African nations “develop robust and responsible ID ecosystems around digital identity in the service of development, humanitarian action, security & facilitation.”

The movement’s members include representatives from African governments, development agencies & industry. Its motivation is “the need to promote legal identity for all in Africa (consistent with SDG 16.9) & to empower individuals to claim their rights & to benefit from the fruits of development.”

WHAT IS LEGAL IDENTITY?

Legal identity is the legal recognition of the basic characteristics of an individual’s identity—e.g. name, sex, place and date of birth, family ties—by an authorized civil registration authority following a major life event (i.e. birth, marriage, divorce, adoption, death).

If a person is not registered at birth or given a birth certificate, they may be able to acquire a legal identity by a government issued or legally recognized identification authority, such as the case for some refugees or non-nationals.

THE UNITED NATIONS LEGAL IDENTITY AGENDA

The United Nations Legal Identity Agenda 2020- 2030 (UN LIA), backed by the Deputy Secretary-General, was launched as a “One UN” approach to:

- establish a common approach to the issue of functional registration and legal identity with the World Bank Group; and
- to support of Member States building holistic, country-owned, sustainable civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems.

Building on existing systems and structures, these UN LIA’s efforts to reduce the global identity gap will be closely coordinated across shared value sectors in health and proven interventions aimed at accelerating progress towards Sustainable Development Goal target 16.9—*legal identity for all, including birth registration*—and SDG 17.19, which aims to support statistical capacity-building.

CALL FOR COMMITMENTS

High-level political commitment from Member States and sufficient support from the development community will be critical to reach the benchmark goal of ‘*closing the global identity gap by 300 million by 2025.*’

Plans are currently underway to set-up a UN LIA Multi-Partner Trust Fund to facilitate a cohesive approach across the UN system to respond to the requests for support from Member States to strengthen their legal identity policy and programming at the national, regional and global levels. This MPTF will allow major funding and development partners supporting efforts across the UN system to pool resources and maximize investments.



KEY MESSAGES

***Note:** [All data below is from this UNICEF document.](#)

LEGAL IDENTITY FOR ALL: A GAME-CHANGER TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS

Legal identity is a fundamental human right. We cannot hope to achieve the SDGs without closing the global identity gap and ensuring we are truly leaving no one behind.

Legal identity—starting from birth—is a game-changer for accelerating progress towards reaching the SDGs.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, around 95 million children under 5 never had their births recorded, and 120 million children don't have a birth certificate.

Legal identity helps protect against violence, exploitation, abuse & neglect. Without proof of legal identity, individuals may not be able to acquire a nationality and become stateless.

If we are to unlock the full potential of the world's population, we must take a life-cycle approach to identity starting from birth and ending with death.

In many countries, proof of legal identity ensures access to education, health care & social services, which in turn helps to break the pervasive cycle of poverty and inequality.

Without proof of legal identity, individuals—especially women & children—may be forced to resort to participation in informal labour market, and risk being subjected to extremely poor working conditions, trafficking, sexual exploitation, & lack of access to justice.

Legal identity for all is not only the sustainable solution for closing the global identity gap, but the key to fulfilling the promise to “leave no one behind” and realizing in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Registration systems must be universal and accessible, without discrimination that might prevent or deter marginalized populations from being able to register vital events on a basis of their gender, ethnicity, nationality, or religion.

INVEST IN SAFE, SUSTAINABLE, EFFECTIVE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

Sufficient financial resources must be allocated to build sustainable, universal and inclusive civil registration systems. Efforts should focus on modernizing and expanding access to legal identity and civil registration systems.

Civil registration data can help to track and measure progress towards the SDGs.

States should cover the cost of civil registration systems, including fees associated with registration and waivers for fines for late registration. Civil registrars must also be adequately paid to reduce reliance on bribes and hidden fees.

Data privacy must be protected through regulatory measures for all registration and identity systems, both digital and traditional.

Coordination among the various actors is critical to pool and mobilize resources, while avoiding duplication of efforts.

Registering births and deaths is critical to improving public health. Without an effective system to register births, deaths and causes of deaths, Governments miss out on vital information that can help to accurately monitor and respond to child health concerns.

Children whose births and deaths are not registered are missed from CRVS systems, leading to under-estimations of newborn and child mortality.



- Across Africa, only 1 in 4 newborns are registered at birth, and account for the highest rate of child mortality—with most dying from preventable and treatable countries.

Without a birth certificate, or other forms of legal identity, a child may **not be able to access health care or services** in many countries, with serious implications for combating illness, injuries and disability.

Without death registration we do not know **who, where or from what, people are dying**, impeding the ability to provide life-saving interventions.

Legislation must be reviewed and revised to combat discriminatory laws and policies restricting women's ability to register their children at birth or access health services without their husband present.

Birth registration provides legal documentation needed to protect against child marriage, which is often correlated with early pregnancies and childbearing.

- More than 1 in 3 young women living in sub-Saharan Africa today were married in childhood, and 1 in 9 were married before their 15th birthday.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS FOR CLOSING THIS IDENTITY GAP

Through innovation and investment in research for sustainable, effective solutions, we can drive progress to close the global identity gap and fulfil our promise to leave no one behind.

There's no one size fits all. Digital registration systems must be adapted to each country's needs.

We cannot measure annual progress without secure, consistent data collection from vital statistics collected by public health programs at all levels. By registering births and deaths, we can better calculate health indicators, e.g. life expectancy, fertility, mortality rates/ratios and causes of death.

- Policies must be changed to close the gap & ensure the most vulnerable are counted:
 - o Nearly half the countries in sub-Saharan Africa require births to be registered within a month or less.
 - o Death registration can be as short as 24 hours in some sub-Saharan countries.

By integrating birth registration systems with health services, we can remove obstacles to access and increase awareness from day one for families and individuals.

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND, NO MATTER THE SETTING

Unaccompanied or separated children are especially vulnerable and often lack any documents establishing their identity, which puts them at higher risk for statelessness.

Birth registration can protect refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) against risks such as family separation, trafficking, illegal adoption and the possible denial of their rights to health and education.

A digital system protects birth records from being destroyed in an emergency.

Birth registration helps to prevent statelessness because it establishes a legal record as to where an individual was born and who his/her parents are, elements of information key to proving entitlement to nationality.

Proof of legal identity is critical for those individuals or families seeking to reacquire their property, land and/or inheritance if/when they return to their homes after fleeing or being forcibly evacuated due to conflict or crises.

Children from the poorest areas in the world are the least likely to have a legal identity, leaving them invisible, uncounted & left behind.

How can you find a missing child who has no record of existence? Birth certificates help protect children against trafficking.



SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING

Please feel free to add your own respective hashtags/handles, and adapt as needed to fit your tone & style.

***Note:** [All data below is from this UNICEF document.](#)

#Legalidentity—starting from birth—is #gamechanger for accelerating progress towards reaching the #SDGs. @ID4Africa @UN

To unlock the full potential of the 🌐's population, we must take a life-cycle approach to identity from birth to death.

#legalidentity for everyone, everywhere. @ID4Africa

#Legalidentity is a fundamental #humanright.

If we want to achieve the #SDGs, we must close the global identity gap & ensure we are truly leaving no one behind. @ID4Africa

#Legalidentity for all means everyone has the right to:

- ✓ access health care
- ✓ go to school
- ✓ receive social services

.@ID4Africa

No birth certificate means you can't:

- A) prove who you are
- B) your age
- C) prove you exist
- D) ALL of the above ✓

#legalidentity for everyone, everywhere. @ID4Africa

Without a #birthcertificate, children can't be enrolled in school or get vaccinated in some countries. Everyone deserves the opportunity for a better, healthier future.

Innovation & investment in sustainable, effective, proven solutions are key to drive progress towards closing the global #identity gap. #Legalidentity @ID4Africa

Current lack of data means MILLIONS are left INVISIBLE.

Countries MUST implement effective, sustainable data collection programs to ensure a better future for all. #legalidentity @ID4Africa

Identity systems are a 🔑 source of #data for #goodgovernance at all levels.

#legalidentity @ID4Africa

When we invest in training local #community workers to provide #legalidentity on the ground to the people who need it most! #leavenoonebehind

Community & religious leaders can play an important role to raise awareness & improve access to #legalidentity for all.

By registering births and deaths, we can better calculate #health indicators, i.e. life expectancy, fertility, mortality rates/ratios & causes of death. #legalidentity @ID4Africa

FACT: #deathregistration is 🔑 to create the life-saving interventions we need because it tells us who, where, & what people are dying from. #legalidentity @ID4Africa



A #legalidentity from birth is a life-long passport to access fundamental #humanrights—i.e.:

- ✓ #healthcare
- ✓ #education
- ✓ #protection from child labor, marriage & trafficking.

A brighter future for all. @ID4Africa

Over the last 20 years there's been little to NO improvement in #birthregistration levels for children under 5 in #SubSaharanAfrica.

#legalidentity for all. @ID4Africa

Newborns are least likely to be registered at birth & even fewer have a birth certificate.

This means they're at risk of being denied:

- ⊗ life-saving medical care such as;
- ⊗ immunization & health care in 10 countries in Africa.

#legalidentity for all from the start. @ID4Africa

By linking immunization with national registration systems, we can significantly increase birth certification.

#legalidentity

#DYK: ~120 MILLION children under age 5 in #SubSaharanAfrica don't have a birth certificate.

#legalidentity from day 1 means a brighter future for all. @ID4Africa

A birth certificate is the only form of #legalidentity for children. #legalidentity for all, INCLUDING birth registration. @ID4Africa #SDGs

If we don't act now, there could be almost 115 MILLION unregistered children under 5 in #SubSaharanAfrica by 2030.

#legalidentity for all. @ID4Africa

FACT: A child's birth can't be registered after 1 month or less in over 50% of countries in #SubSaharanAfrica.

#legalidentity

#DYK About 3 out of 4 infants in #SubSaharanAfrica do not have a birth certificate, may be denied access to healthcare, immunization.

A #legalidentity, #foreverychild.

Hidden fees for #birthregistration often prevent children from being registered.

No one should be denied proof of #legalidentity because they can't afford it. @ID4Africa

What are some barriers to #birthregistration?

- ✓ distance to the nearest registration facility
- ✓ no info on how to register a birth
- ✓ 💰 cost for registration or getting a birth certificate

#ForEveryChild...a legal identity. @ID4Africa

What are some barriers to #birthregistration?

- ✓ traditional customs & practices
- ✓ discrimination based on ethnicity &/or religion
- ✓ gender inequality—i.e. only the father can register a child

#legalidentity. @ID4Africa

3 in 4 children in #SubSaharanAfrica live in countries where #birthregistration isn't free 💰. #legalidentity is a fundamental #humanright for all. @ID4Africa



Review & revise discriminatory laws so women can register their children at birth & access #health services w/o their husband present.

#legalidentity #genderequality @ID4Africa

Women are often primary caregivers for their children's #health & #education.

Without a #legalidentity, both mothers & their children are at higher risk of being denied access to exercise their rights & protections.

FACT: #Birthregistration can help #endchildmarriage 🚫 👤 👤.

How? It provides legal proof of a child's age.

#legalidentity for all. @ID4Africa

No #birthcertificate? No safeguard against #childmarriage.

A birth certificate means legal proof of a child's age.

#ForEveryChild, a childhood. @ID4Africa

4 in 10 young women are married before age 18 in #SubSaharanAfrica.

This is the highest rate of #childmarriage in the 🌍.

#Birthregistration can help prevent this with legal proof of a child's age. @ID4Africa

SAMPLE PHOTOS

Guinea-Bissau: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2AM408R6VOQ.html>

Sudan: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2AM408YPUJ6.html>

Sudan: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2F3L53CL4IV.html>

Central African Republic: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2F3HRGYI4T.html>

Central African Republic: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2AM4080QJ9SQ.html>

Niger: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2AM408ZUE4T.html>

Niger: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2AM40804DG3.html>

Sierra Leone: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2AMZIFLE80R3.html>

Cameroon: <https://weshare.unicef.org/archive/-2AMZIF65LBE.html>