



UN Statistics  
Division



UNITED NATIONS  
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ESCWA



# SESSION 8. NATIONAL-LEVEL DESIGNATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF A CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM

## UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION

Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics  
System, Revision 3 for Arabic-speaking countries

Muscat, Oman, 14 - 17 November 2016



## Two components



### ❑ **Legal framework**

a) *Principles and Recommendations, para 304-305*

b) *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Preparation of a Legal Framework*

### ❑ **Organisational structures at the national level**

a) *Principles and Recommendations, para 306-315*

b) *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Management, Operation and Maintenance, para 29-81*



## Legal framework at national level



### **Constitution**

- Highest law of the land
- Major concepts such as individual rights, citizenship ...
- Generic in character

### **Law(s)**

- Derived from the Constitution
- Substantive as well as procedural provisions
- Some laws are more substantive than others (Family Law, Criminal Law)
- Others are more procedural (Law on Criminal Justice Procedure, Civil Registration Law)

### **Regulation(s)**

- Derived from laws
- Procedural provisions
- Easier to enact



- ❑ **Principles of civil registration legislation**
  - ❑ Principle of legality – civil registration reflects reality, i.e. the events that occurred, once registered, become legally valid
  - ❑ Protecting interest of the individual – providing ready access to the service, full information on procedure and outcomes, ensuring confidentiality and privacy of individual information, easy retrieval
  - ❑ Principle of official status – the law must give the registration agency the power and authority to promote registration; update or correct entries in the register; ensure the integrity of the civil registration system
  - ❑ Compulsoriness of registration – the law has to spell out the obligation to register; to outline that entries in the civil registration constitute the only official and legal proof of civil status
  - ❑ Simplification of the service
  - ❑ Free service



- ❑ **General provisions**
  - ❑ Definitions of vital events
  - ❑ Compulsoriness of registration
  - ❑ Collection of statistical items
  - ❑ Confidentiality
  - ❑ Privacy
  - ❑ Access and safekeeping
  - ❑ Storage and preservation of records
  
- ❑ **Civil registration infrastructure**
  - ❑ Agency in charge of registration
  - ❑ Chief registrar – authority, responsibilities
  - ❑ Local registrar – authority, responsibilities
  - ❑ Registration units, notifiers, informants



- Sphere of competence of the civil register**
  - Responsibility of the register for completeness and place of registration
  
- Making entries in the register**
  - General content of the register
  - Deadlines
  
- Specific registers**
  - Indicates specific procedures for registering births, deaths, marriages ...
  - Designates informants for each type of event
  - Incentives for registration
  - Sanctions for non-compliance
  
- Amendment of registration records**
  - Spelling out authorization and procedures for amending records



# Legal framework - components



## **Proof of registration**

- Authorizing officials to issue documents certifying the facts of registration

## **Statistical reports**

- Specify the agency where statistical forms need to be sent
- Deadlines for submitting statistical forms
- Cooperation and division of labor

## **Inspection and penalties**

- Oversight procedures and authority
- Penalties

## **Funding**

- Designates source of funding
- Funding procedures

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## Organizational structures



- ❑ Law on civil registration
- ❑ Depending on the judicial, political and administrative circumstances
- ❑ As well as history, tradition
  - ❑ Assigns the authority for registration of vital events
  - ❑ A newly formed or existing institution
  - ❑ Centralized or decentralized





## Centralized civil registration system



- ❑ **Centralized system is characterized by**
  - ❑ Central agency responsible for civil registration
  - ❑ National standards
  - ❑ Uniform registration procedures
  - ❑ Administering and managing the system nation-wide
  - ❑ Supervision
  - ❑ Evaluation
  - ❑ Coordination with other – statistics, health services



# Centralized civil registration system



## ❑ Advantages

- ❑ Standard legal frame for the registration system, promoting uniform legislation
- ❑ Facilitates the interpretation and enforcement of norms and regulations
- ❑ Allows for uniform procedures for recording, including certification and release
- ❑ Maintenance and control over the entire system
- ❑ Facilitates nation-wide research based on uniformity
- ❑ Easier training of registrars, updates of procedures
- ❑ Easier introduction of new standardized technologies

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## Decentralized civil registration system



- ❑ In a decentralized system – civil registration can be administered at the level of major civil division
- ❑ Common in countries with federal political system
- ❑ Need for an agency at the national level to harmonize procedures, definitions, classifications
- ❑ The role of central statistical agency increases
  - ❑ May act as the clearinghouse
  - ❑ Standardization of methodology



## Concluding remarks on organizational structure



- ❑ Irrespective of the organizational paradigm – centralized or decentralized – the registration takes place at the local level
  - ❑ Consequently, the structure of the civil registration units is the building block of the system
  - ❑ So is the role of the local registrar
- ❑ Inter-agency coordination body
- ❑ Sustained emphasis on the role of civil status and civil registration by the Government