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for a
Vital Statistics System

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STATISTICAL PAPERS . . . SERIES **M** NO. **19**

**Principles
for a
Vital Statistics System**

**Recommendations for the Improvement and
Standardization of Vital Statistics**

STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Department of Economic Affairs

NEW YORK

August 1953

FOREWORD

These "Principles for a Vital Statistics System" are the final recommendations for the improvement and standardization of vital statistics, based on a survey of procedures in fifty-eight countries, on the opinions of forty-one governments, the views of the Population Commission and the Statistical Commission at their sixth and seventh sessions, the comments of the Expert Committee on Health Statistics of the World Health Organization, and the observations of individual expert demographers and technicians in Latin America, North America, South-East Asia, the Middle East, and the Western Pacific Region.

The Principles which were developed in response to a request of the Statistical Commission with the endorsement of the Population Commission (E/1696, para. 88 and E/1711, para. 46) were approved by the Statistical Commission at its seventh session in February 1953.¹ The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in April 1953 approved the Principles in the following resolution which further emphasized the importance of vital statistics and the need for action in this field of statistics:

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of adequate vital statistics for public health, demographic and social studies and for the economic development of each country, as well as their value for international purposes,

Taking note that the Statistical Commission had adopted a set of principles for a vital statistics system and that the Population Commission has expressed the view that these principles will serve an immediate and constructive purpose,

1. *Recommends* that governments give attention to the importance of developing vital statistics to meet demographic, economic, public health and social needs;

2. *Suggests* that, as facilities and resources permit, governments review and appraise their procedures for registering vital events and compiling vital statistics, taking into consideration the principles for a vital statistics system, and introduce such changes as are feasible to improve national statistics and their international comparability in this field;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consult with governments and to give assistance as requested in the use of these principles;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, when forwarding the present resolution and the principles for a vital statistics system to governments, to draw their attention to the priorities suggested by the Population and Statistical Commissions for the collection of vital statistics and to emphasize that where a vital registration system is being introduced or extended the sound organization of the registration system should precede any attempt to obtain from it the full range of vital statistics.

In the view of the Statistical Commission, vital statistics should be a fundamental and integral part of the activities of each national statistical system. The Commission agreed that the necessity for improving data in this field is not limited to the so-called "underdeveloped" countries since, even in "developed" countries, the international study of demographic problems is made difficult by lack of statistical comparability.

Some of the causes of non-comparability arise from unique national needs or legal provisions which countries may find difficult to modify. On the other hand, other types of non-comparability persist only for the reason that, heretofore, there have been no generally agreed upon principles which could serve as "guides" to countries wishing to improve the comparability of their vital statistics. For this reason, the Commission expressed the view that the Principles should not be considered as limited to any particular group of countries. They should rather be considered as a goal or target for countries developing vital statistics by the registration method and as a guide for those reorganizing or appraising their existing systems with a view to improving the quality and comparability of statistics.

The Statistical Commission and the Population Commission agreed that the "Principles for a Vital Statistics System" should be given immediate publication in order that they might be brought to the attention of the appropriate operating agencies in each country. Their publication in this series of the Statistical Papers will ensure their ready availability to the many local and national officials concerned. To facilitate reference, marginal indices have been added and a complete alphabetic subject-matter index begins on p. 27. A glossary of terms used may be found on p. 25.

¹ The Principles are included in the Report of the Seventh Session of the Statistical Commission (Supplement No. 5, E/2365, pp. 24-37).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

	<i>Page</i>
Background	1
Concepts underlying the Principles	2
Applicability of Principles	2
Uses of vital statistics	3

Part 1

GENERAL PRINCIPLES (101-109)

101. Definition of a vital statistics system	4
102. Function of the vital statistics system	4
103. Confidentiality of registration records and statistical reports	4
104. Designation of responsibilities for the vital statistics system	4
105. Co-ordination between agencies with responsibilities in the vital statistics system	4
106. Critical evaluation of the vital statistics system	5
107. Place of sampling in the vital statistics system	5
108. Place of special surveys in the vital statistics system	5
109. Place of record linkage (population registers) in the vital statistics system	5

Part 2

PRINCIPLES FOR LEGAL REGISTRATION OF VITAL EVENTS IN SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO VITAL STATISTICS (201-216)

201. Vital events on which data should be collected by the registration method	6
202. Definition for statistical purposes of each event on which data may be collected by the registration method	6
203. Compulsory nature of registration	7
204. Incentives to registration	7
205. Organization for registration at local and national level	7
206. Number and size of primary registration units	8
207. The registrar—his duties and responsibilities with respect to registration	8
208. Improving the efficiency of registrars	8
209. Designation of legally responsible informant	8
210. Place where registration is to be made	8
211. Cost of current registration	8
212. Time allowed for current registration	8
213. Provision for delayed registration	9
214. Provision for registration of "declared events"	9
215. Form and content of the registration record	9
216. Definition of each item on the registration record	9

Part 3

PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECORDING, REPORTING, AND COLLECTING OF DATA FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES (301-309)

301. Statistical reporting—coverage	10
302. Statistical reporting area—geographic and ethnic aspects	10
303. Organization for collection of statistical reports	10

	<i>Page</i>
304. Control of receipt of statistical reports	10
305. The registrar—his duties and responsibilities with respect to recording and reporting statistical information	10
306. Improvement of completeness and accuracy of data reported for statistical purposes	10
307. Form of the statistical report on a vital event	11
308. Content of the statistical report on a vital event	11
309. Definition of each item on the statistical report	13

Part 4

PRINCIPLES FOR COMPILATION OF VITAL STATISTICS (401-412)

401. Goal of the compilation programme	17
402. Tabulation area—geographic aspect	17
403. Tabulation coverage—ethnic aspect	17
404. Organization for compilation of national vital statistics	17
405. National compilation from individual statistical reports	18
406. Tabulation coverage—"cut-off date"	18
407. Tabulation by calendar periods	18
408. Tabulation by date of occurrence or date of registration	18
409. Tabulation by place of occurrence and place of residence	18
410. Annual tabulation programme for national and international purposes	19
411. Tabulations necessary for the administration of the vital registration system	23
412. Provision of tabulations to meet local needs	23
Glossary of terms	25
Subject-matter index	27

PRINCIPLES FOR A VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND STANDARDIZATION OF VITAL STATISTICS

INTRODUCTION

Background

1. National statistical services should provide adequate statistics, including vital statistics, which can be the basis for informed national decisions on economic and social matters and which can meet international responsibilities in the field. In recognition of their basic importance, and in accordance with the Council resolution 2/8 adopted on 21 June 1946, by which the functions of the Statistical Commission, as set forth in its terms of reference, include "promoting the development of national statistics and the improvement of their comparability", and resolution 41 (IV) on "Improvement of Comparability and Quality of Basic Population Statistics", the Statistical Commission took under consideration, at its fourth session in 1949, the development and improvement of national vital statistics and their comparability.

2. Comparability can only be achieved through the adoption and implementation by all nations, in so far as their individual requirements permit, of the same general concepts and definitions. Therefore, at its fifth session in 1950, the Statistical Commission recommended that "detailed draft recommendations for the improvement and standardization of vital statistics" be prepared (E/1696, para. 88). The Population Commission endorsed this proposal (E/1711, para. 46) and noted that the implementation of these recommendations would improve mortality, fertility and other population data necessary for the study of basic demographic problems and the interrelationships of demographic, economic, and social factors.

3. Preliminary draft recommendations were considered by the Statistical and Population Commissions at their sixth sessions in 1951. On their recommendation, the document was circulated during 1951 to all Members of the United Nations, to other nations which might be expected to provide comment and to the specialized agency with particular interest in the matter, namely the World Health Organization. The "Principles for a Vital Statistics System" presented in this document is a revision of the recommendations, based on the comments elicited by these consultations and on those of the Statistical Commission and the Population Commission.¹

¹ For a complete history of the development of the Principles, see the reports of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th sessions of the Statistical Commission and of the Population Commission, and "Proposed Standards for Vital Records and Statistics", E/CN.3/123--E/CN.9/65.

Background

Underlying concepts

Concepts underlying the Principles

4. The Principles set forth in this document are not regulations or mandatory requirements, binding on nations. Rather, they are intended to set forth the elements which should be considered in the evaluation of any vital registration and statistics system. They are guiding principles which, when adapted to special conditions in each country, should result in more comparable and useful vital statistics.²

5. For convenience in reference, the Principles are grouped into four categories and serially numbered within each part, as follows:

Part 1. General principles (101-109);

Part 2. Principles for legal registration of vital events in so far as they relate to vital statistics (201-216);

Part 3. Principles for the recording, reporting, and collecting of data for statistical purposes (301-309);

Part 4. Principles for compilation of vital statistics (401-412).

6. It is recognized that the vital statistics system depends upon administrative and legal arrangements, many of which are matters of purely national concern. Therefore, the "Principles for registration" (part 2) do not cover all registration practice. They deal only with those registration aspects which have a bearing on the statistical report in terms of its content or its collection (and hence with the comparability of resulting statistics) and not with the legal connotations.

7. The Principles are in accord with previous international recommendations wherever they are applicable. Specifically, it may be noted that the recommendations relating to the responsibility for medical certification of cause of death, that referring to the use of the "International Form of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death", as well as the definition and classification of cause of death are in accordance with the World Health Organization Regulations No. 1 Regarding Nomenclature (Including the Compilation and Publication of Statistics) with Respect to Diseases and Causes of Death. The definitions of "live birth" and foetal death" are those adopted by the Third World Health Assembly.

8. The definitions of "industry", "occupation", "status", "literacy", and "level of education" are in accordance with "Recommendations Regarding Subjects Which Should be Covered by Censuses of Population Taken in or Around 1950", made by the Population Commission of the United Nations at its third session, while the definition of "marital status" and certain of the age classifications shown in the tabulation programme of the Principles are in accordance with recommended "Tabulations of Data from Population Censuses to be Taken in or About 1950", drawn up by the Population Commission at its fourth session.

9. It is emphasized also that the Principles which follow are not intended to spell out the detailed procedures of a vital statistics programme with respect to either registration, collection, or tabulation. Evaluation of methods and procedures for the implementation of the Principles, as well as their implications, will be made available in supplementary publications.

Applicability

Applicability of Principles

10. These recommendations will be of value to countries now in process of organizing or reorganizing their vital statistics systems, as well as to countries appraising their systems with a view to improving the quality and comparability of their existing statistics.

11. The basic principles in parts 1-4 will be particularly applicable as guides to countries in which vital statistics are produced by a registration system of the conventional type and to those which, in developing vital

² Specific meanings attached to certain terms used in the Principles have been set forth in a glossary, beginning on page 25.

INTRODUCTION

statistics, contemplate the adoption of the traditional system. This nominal restriction of the principles is in recognition of the fact that the conventional method of obtaining vital statistics data from registration records is of limited applicability to statistically under-developed areas, and that, for these areas, alternative methods may have to be considered for a transitional or interim period.

Applicability
(continued)

12. It should be noted that neither these alternative methods nor the basic methods for the establishment of a registration system are dealt with in these Principles. Even in countries which have not as yet developed an adequate registration system, the Principles will serve as a goal for such future development and will be useful as a guide in their work of appraising and improving the quality and scope of demographic data.

Uses of vital statistics

Uses of vital statistics

13. The development of a system of vital statistics or the adoption of recommendations for improvement depend for their implementation on the recognition of the uses for the statistics concerned. The most important uses for vital statistics, as demonstrated by the experiences of many countries, are set forth in the following paragraphs.

14. The systematic recording of births and deaths was initially a procedure for establishing a record solely for its legal value. Recognition of the value of these records as a source of statistics developed much later as the potential uses of vital statistics as administrative and research tools became evident. One of the most important uses of vital statistics may be said to be their function in the demographic analysis of population for economic and social purposes. An analysis of the present demographic status of a population as well as its potential growth in terms of size, characteristics, geographic distribution, and health status, is of paramount importance in determining the economic and social life of a population, and must be based on a study of the natality, nuptiality, and mortality rates effective in that population.

15. Correlated with the general economic and social uses of vital statistics are the administrative and research needs of public health agencies in connexion with the development, planning, operation and evaluation of public health and medical programmes. Analysis of vital statistics with respect to the general and specific death rates is essential to the programmes of disease control. In addition to analytical uses, the public health authorities at the local level depend on the individual reports of the occurrences of specified events for initiating administrative action which will set in motion follow-up procedures essential to the maintenance of public health in the area.

16. Vital statistics are also employed for determining administrative action in connexion with the programme of governmental agencies other than those concerned with public health, and also in relation to numerous professional, private and commercial activities. Planning and production of public and private housing and educational facilities; planning and operating social security programmes and private insurance enterprises; production of consumer goods such as medicines, food, clothing, furniture, and equipment for infants and mothers, as well as household equipment in general; provision of medical care facilities for deliveries, services for interment, and so forth, are all dependent on information produced by the vital statistics system.

17. These needs, as well as the demands of the individual for documentary proof of an event and its characteristics, must all be met by the vital statistics system. To meet these needs adequately in all their ramifications, the system must operate according to certain well-defined principles which are applicable at every step beginning with the registration procedure and ending with the distribution of statistics.

PART 1
GENERAL PRINCIPLES (101-109)

Definition of system	<p>101. Definition of a vital statistics system</p> <p>For purposes of these Principles, a vital statistics system can be defined as including the legal registration, statistical recording and reporting of the occurrence of, and the collection, compilation, analysis, presentation, and distribution of statistics pertaining to "vital events", which in turn include live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimations, recognitions, annulments, and legal separations.³</p>
Registration method	<p>102. Function of the vital statistics system</p> <p>(a) The development of vital statistics by the registration method is the function of the vital statistics system.</p> <p>(b) The registration method is defined as the continuous and permanent, compulsory recording of the occurrence and the characteristics of vital events primarily for their value as legal documents as provided by law and secondarily for their usefulness as a source of statistics, as provided through decree or regulation, in accordance with legal requirements in each country.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>103. Confidentiality of registration records and statistical reports</p> <p>Confidentiality of personal information on the registration records should be safeguarded by law in so far as consistent with its use for administrative and statistical purposes. The statistical reports should be open to the widest possible legitimate usage consistent with the needs for confidentiality in each country.</p>
Organization of system	<p>104. Designation of responsibilities for the vital statistics system</p> <p>(a) Responsibility for the establishment or development of a national vital statistics system should be the function of a national governmental agency or agencies.</p> <p>(b) The assignment of functions should be accompanied by clear designation of duties and responsibilities with respect to registration, recording, reporting, collection, compilation, analysis, presentation, and distribution of data, and the critical evaluation of the system.</p>
Co-ordination	<p>105. Co-ordination between agencies with responsibilities in the vital statistics system.</p> <p>(a) Clear delineation of duties should be supplemented by arrangements for co-ordination of needs and services between official agencies concerned with the registration of events for legal purposes, those responsible for compiling facts for statistical purposes, and those who use these data for administrative or analytical purposes in connexion with economic and social matters, or for planning, operating, and evaluating public health programmes either on a national or an international scale.</p> <p>(b) Co-ordination, especially with respect to coverage, definitions, classification schemes and tabulation programmes, should also be maintained with the authorities responsible for the population census or other types of population statistics, with those in charge of migration statistics, with the agencies responsible for public health statistics, and other related social and economic statistics.</p>

³ Other types of events of recognized demographic importance, such as migratory movements, naturalizations, and so forth, are not included in this definition because information on them is not usually collected through the regular civil registration system to which the Principles refer. Particular attention is drawn to the desirability of exploring methods for obtaining data on non-registered marital unions (variously known as "common-law", "customary" or "consensual") with recognition of the fact that, by their very characteristics, they are not obtained by the registration method as defined in Principle 102.

GENERAL

Pr. 106-109

(c) The co-ordinating mechanism established to achieve these objectives should have a direct relationship with the agency responsible for the general co-ordination of the national system of statistics.¹

Co-ordination
(continued)

106. Critical evaluation of the vital statistics system

Evaluation

(a) As a supplement to co-ordination, responsibility for the establishment and execution of methods for critical evaluation of the vital statistics system should be vested in a designated authority.

(b) The elements of the evaluation programmes will vary in detail according to the degree of development of the system, but should include at some stage intensive studies of the degree of completeness of registration and of statistical reporting of events, with a view to evaluating the quantitative accuracy of vital statistics; analysis of the completeness and accuracy with which items of information relating to an event are recorded; determination of the success with which the tabulation programme meets the needs of consumers in terms of timeliness, adequacy and quality of statistics, and the general efficiency with which the system operates.

107. Place of sampling in the vital statistics system

Sampling

The place of sampling in vital statistics procedures should be explored with a view to determining its applicability to quality control throughout the system, and to special surveys. It is evident that sampling is not applicable to legal registration, because every vital event which occurs among the population should be registered for legal purposes. However, where a complete registration system is not practicable or sufficiently reliable, the possibility of applying sampling methods to the reporting, collection and compilation phases should be explored, keeping in mind its limitations in providing the desired detail, and the requirement that sampling be carried out only under rigorous scientific specifications.

108. Place of special surveys in the vital statistics system

Special surveys

The value of special or census surveys in conjunction with the conventional system of vital statistics should be recognized as a means of gathering facts which cannot be collected so efficiently by routine comprehensive statistical reporting, or those which are required only at such widely separated intervals of time that it is inadvisable to include them as regularly reportable items of information for statistical purposes.

109. Place of record linkage (population registers) in the vital statistics system

Record linkage
Population registers

The value of interrelating or linking vital records and of integrating these with census records in a continuous register system of population accounting is recognized, but establishment of such population registers should be contingent upon an evaluation of the statistical advantages to be derived in relation to cost and to the associated administrative purposes such a system would serve.

¹In some countries it has been found that co-ordination as recommended in this Principle has been facilitated through the establishment of "National Committees on Vital and Health Statistics" (of which the Statistical Commission took note at its fifth session) or committees or councils of a similar character.

PART 2

PRINCIPLES FOR LEGAL REGISTRATION OF VITAL EVENTS IN SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO VITAL STATISTICS (201-216)

Priorities in registration

201. Vital events on which data should be collected by the registration method

(a) In general the vital events on which data should be collected by the registration method are those defined as constituting the field of vital statistics, i.e., live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimations, recognitions, annulments, and legal separations, and which are defined for statistical purposes in Principle 202 below.

(b) In establishing or developing a vital statistics system, first priority should be given to setting up procedures for the registration and reporting of live births and deaths.

(c) Provision for registration of foetal deaths, marriages, and divorces should have secondary priority. With respect to foetal deaths, it may further be noted that, although the registration of all foetal deaths irrespective of the period of gestation is a desirable goal to be attained as soon as possible, as a minimum all countries should register all foetal deaths occurring after the 28th completed week of gestation.

(d) Arrangements for registration of adoptions, legitimations, recognitions, annulments, and legal separations should have a lower priority but represent an ultimate registration goal.

Definition of vital events

202. Definition for statistical purposes of each event on which data may be collected by the registration method

(a) The definition of each event on which data are collected for vital statistics purposes should conform, in so far as possible, with the definitions for statistical purposes given in paragraph (c) below.

(b) If a legal concept or definition in any country cannot be harmonized with these, provision should be made to report the events as defined below or in accordance with definitions which do not differ in principle from those below. If this is impossible, full description of divergencies should be given wherever statistics of these events appear.

(c) The recommended statistical definitions are as follows:

(1) LIVE BIRTH is the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, which, after such separation, breathes or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached; each product of such a birth is considered live-born.

All live-born infants should be registered and counted as such irrespective of the period of gestation or whether alive or dead at time of registration, and if they die at any time following birth they should also be registered and counted as deaths.

(2) DEATH is the permanent disappearance of all evidence of life at any time after live birth has taken place (post-natal cessation of vital functions without capability of resuscitation). This definition therefore excludes foetal deaths.

(3) FŒTAL DEATH is death prior to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy; the death is indicated by the fact that after such separation the foetus does not breathe or show any other evidence of life,

such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles.

(4) STILLBIRTH is defined as synonymous with late foetal death, that is, one of twenty-eight completed weeks of gestation or over, subject to considerations mentioned in the footnote to this definition.⁵

(5) MARRIAGE is the legal union of persons of opposite sex. The legality of the union may be established by civil, religious, or other means as recognized by the laws of each country; and irrespective of the type of marriage, each should be reported for vital statistics purposes.

(6) DIVORCE is a final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, the separation of husband and wife by a judicial decree which confers on the parties the right to civil and/or religious remarriage, according to the laws of each country.

(7) ADOPTION is the legal and voluntary taking and treating of the child of other parents as one's own, in so far as provided by the laws of each country. ("Affiliation" is considered a type of adoption.)

(8) LEGITIMATION is the formal investing of a person with the status and rights of legitimacy, according to the laws of each country.

(9) RECOGNITION is the legal acknowledgment, either voluntarily or compulsorily, of the paternity of an illegitimate child.

(10) ANNULMENT is the invalidation or voiding of a marriage by a competent authority, according to the laws of each country, which confers on the parties the status of never having been married to each other.

(11) LEGAL SEPARATION is the disunion of married persons, according to the laws of each country, which does not confer on the parties the right to remarry.

203. Compulsory nature of registration

(a) In accordance with priorities established under Principle 201, registration of every vital event occurring within the boundaries of the country should be made legally compulsory for every group of the population and parallel provision for enforcement should be established.

(b) Supplementary arrangements on a non-compulsory basis for registration of events among national residents who are temporarily abroad may be provided at the national level.

(c) The efficiency with which these provisions operate or may be presumed to operate should not be a factor in their establishment.

204. Incentives to registration

Incentives should be established to stimulate and encourage compliance with the compulsory registration law.

205. Organization for registration at local and national level

(a) When the administrative and geographic organization of the country permits, responsibility for effecting the legal registration of vital events should be placed on official local agencies which are directly dependent, in so far as registration matters are concerned, on a national office which can co-ordinate, unify, supervise, and promote registration efficiency to the end that it satisfies both legal and statistical needs.

(b) In case direct dependence from the national level is not possible, the appropriate national office should have the functions of co-ordination.

Compulsion to register
Completeness of
registration

Incentives

Organization for
registration

⁵ Countries which prefer to continue to use the term "stillbirth" in statistical publications instead of the term "foetal death" should, in such publications, define stillbirths as early, intermediate, and late foetal deaths, as the case may be. The Statistical Commission has in mind the possibility that the use of the term "foetal death" in statistical publications may cause confusion in some cases and may lead to impairment of the clear distinctions at present drawn in recording and compiling statistics of live births and deaths.

REGISTRATION

Pr. 213-216

respect to all the contributory factors operating in the country and should be as short as is consistent with the facilitating of the current and accurate registration of all necessary facts.

Time allowed
(continued)

213. Provision for delayed registration

Delayed registration

(a) Every vital statistics system should recognize the inevitability of delayed or late registration, i.e., those registrations which can be effected through regular registration procedures but which are made after the expiration of the standard registration period.

(b) Provision should be made for registering these events in a way which will discourage repetition, but not discourage registration.

214. Provision for registration of "declared events"

"Declared events"

(a) Every vital registration system should recognize the inevitability of the need for registering "declared events", such as live births or legally presumed deaths which occurred more than 12 months prior to the current month and/or under such circumstances that the conventional procedures and requirements for registration cannot be met.

(b) Provision should be made to register these declared events upon declaration, which may be made subject to an appropriate fee and substantiation by judicial procedures, documentary evidence and/or affidavits, the type and extent of which to be determined by each country.

215. Form and content of the registration record

Registers

(a) Separate registers should be maintained for each type of event on which data are to be collected by the registration method.

(b) In order to ensure uniformity throughout the country, the form and content of the registration record should conform in basic context to a national standard established by the national agency which controls or co-ordinates registration. Such standardization should not, of course, prejudice the right of sub-national authorities to add important items of local interest or administrative value.

(c) When the registration record is the original and only source of information for statistical purposes, provision should be made for obtaining the items listed in Principle 308 (d).

216. Definition of each item on the registration record

Definition of registered items

(a) Each item on the registration record should be defined, clearly and unambiguously, in accordance with international standards, national population census practice and vital statistics requirements.

(b) The designated definitions should be printed either on the registration record itself or in the form of separate instructions, in order that they may be available at all times to the registrar responsible for interpreting them.

Registration units

206. Number and size of primary registration units

(a) Local registration offices should be established in adequate numbers and in such locations as will ensure that they are easily accessible to the public, and they should be kept open for business during convenient hours, so that the informant may comply with the registration requirements within the time allowed for current registration.

(b) The size of the primary registration unit should be such that the registrar in charge can give to that unit the attention required to produce good registration.

The registrar—
registration duties**207. The registrar—his duties and responsibilities with respect to registration**

(a) The duties and responsibilities of the registrar (or his equivalent) at the local, intermediate, and national levels should be codified.

(b) The responsibilities of the registrar should include, as appropriate, the legal recording of the specified information regarding vital events; the responsibility for ensuring compliance with the registration law; the responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of each record; the obligation to adopt such measures as are required to inform the public of the necessity, procedures, and requirements for effecting registration, and the value of vital statistics; the custody of records; and the recording and reporting of data for statistical purposes.

(c) The position of "registrar" should be one of local prestige and responsibility with remuneration sufficient to attract competent personnel.

Guidance for registrars

208. Improving the efficiency of registrars

The national registration authority or its equivalent should take such steps as are necessary to provide guidance and instruction for registrars in the carrying out of their responsibilities.

The informant

209. Designation of legally responsible informant

(a) Responsibilities with respect to informing the registration authorities of the occurrence of an event should be clearly and unequivocally designated by law or regulation, and publicized in such a way that familiarity with the legal obligations is established.

(b) Provision should be made for delegation of authority in certain circumstances as required by questions of literacy, topography, place where event occurs, and so forth.

(c) As far as possible, medical certification of cause of death should be the responsibility of the attending physician.

Place of registration

210. Place where registration is to be made

(a) Each vital event should be registered in the primary registration unit in which it occurred.

(b) The place of residence should always be reported (see Principle 409) and if the registered event concerns a resident of a locality other than that where the event occurred, it may be desirable also to make such arrangements as are required to inform the place of residence of the event.

Cost of registration

211. Cost of current registration

(a) The registration of vital events, as prescribed by law, should be free of charge to the person making the registration if provisions of the law with respect to time and so forth are complied with.

(b) As an incentive to registration, it may be desirable in some countries to furnish an initial proof of registration to the informant, without charge.

Time allowed

212. Time allowed for current registration

The maximum period to be allowed between the occurrence and the obligatory registration of a vital event should be determined with

PART 3
**PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECORDING, REPORTING, AND COLLECTING
OF DATA FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES (301-309)**

Completeness of reporting

301. Statistical reporting—coverage

A statistical report should be made on every event which is legally registered whether registration takes place within the period prescribed for current registration or is delayed, and irrespective of the procedure by which the legal record is established, that is, whether by regular procedures or as a "declared event" (see Principles 213 and 214).

Statistical reporting area

302. Statistical reporting area—geographic and ethnic aspects

(a) No geographic area or ethnic group for which registration records are available should be excluded from the statistical reporting area, and emphasis should be placed on statistical recording and reporting of all events which occur, irrespective of the completeness of registration coverage or the extent of data available.

(b) As far as practicable, qualitative or quantitative indications of the degree of completeness of registration should be given for each geographic reporting area.

Organization for collecting

303. Organization for collection of statistical reports

(a) Reports on vital events for national statistical purposes should be collected centrally by the agency which is responsible for the statistical compilation.

(b) If it is desirable for sub-national purposes, provision should be made for channelling original statistical reports through, or supplying copies thereof to, local, state or provincial departments of government which may require information on individual reports for statistical or other purposes.

Control of collection

304. Control of receipt of statistical reports

(a) Every possible administrative procedure should be employed for controlling the prompt receipt, by the central vital statistical office, of statistical reports from every reporting area, with the object of making possible current tabulations which will be adequate in terms of completeness of geographic and ethnic coverage, timeliness and detail. (See also Principle 401.)

(b) A strict time schedule should be established, taking into account the characteristics of the country in terms of topography, communications, and so forth, as well as the provisions for channelling original reports or copies thereof to intermediate offices.

The registrar—
statistical duties

305. The registrar—his duties and responsibilities with respect to recording and reporting statistical information

(a) The legal definition of the responsibilities of the registrar should specify that he has duties with respect to recording and reporting information for statistical purposes in addition to his responsibilities for filing legal records of events.

(b) Whether the specified procedure provides that he transmit to the statistical authorities a duplicate of the original legal record or an independent statistical form (see Principle 307 below), this report should be as complete and accurate as he can make it and the coverage in terms of events occurred should also be complete and timely.

Querying

306. Improvement of completeness and accuracy of data reported for statistical purposes

(a) An appropriate continuous querying procedure should be established and maintained with respect to all data which are collected

STATISTICAL REPORTING

Pr. 307-308

for statistical purposes—and in particular with respect to terms of doubtful significance used in reporting causes of death—with the purpose of clarifying the facts concerning the event and of educating the informant and the recording agent regarding reporting requirements, in order that the resulting statistics may be improved.

Querying (continued)

(b) Methods to improve basic data by means of continuous training and instruction of registrars and of medical personnel should be an essential part of an effective vital statistics system.

Training of registrars

307. Form of the statistical report on a vital event

Form of statistical report

(a) The form of the statistical report on a vital event should be uniform throughout a country.

(b) For purposes of flexibility and efficiency, the report should be an individual document which provides adequate space for the response to each item of information required.

(c) With respect to medical certification of cause of death, it is suggested that the form adopted should conform as far as possible to the "International Form of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death".⁶

308. Content of the statistical report on a vital event

Content of statistical report

(a) To satisfy national and international needs for vital statistics, the statistical reports of vital events for all countries should contain, as a minimum, a number of basic items and such additional items as may be desirable and practicable in each country.

(b) A list of basic items for reports of live birth, death, foetal death, marriage, and divorce is given in paragraph (d) below. This suggested list is neither a minimum nor a maximum, but a desirable list of items. Each country should consider the scientific value of collecting information on other items which would permit additional analyses of demographic factors in relation to significant social and economic groups within the country. Items of this character which, because of their local rather than universal applicability, are not specified in list (d), might include "ethnic group", "country of birth", "nationality", "citizenship", "religion", "language", or additional information on economic characteristics. (See also Principle 403 (c).)

(c) The exact manner in which the specified items will be set forth on the statistical reports will be determined by each country, but the wording should be such that the results will conform to the definitions given in Principle 309.

(d) Items suggested for each of five statistical reports are given below, arranged in alphabetical order by event and participants, with an indication of first (*) and second priority rating. Some countries at the early stages in the development of their vital statistics systems may wish to subdivide the first priority group in order to establish immediate and more advanced goals.

Priorities in collection

(1) Live-birth statistical report items

Live-birth statistical report

(i) Characteristics of the event or child

- *Attendant at birth
- *Date of occurrence
- *Date of registration
- Hospitalization
- *Legitimacy
- Period of gestation
- *Place of occurrence
- *Sex

⁶ Published in "Medical Certification of Cause of Death. Instructions for Physicians on Use of International Form of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death" (*Bulletin of the World Health Organization: Supplement 3*, Geneva, Switzerland, 1952, p. 7).

Content of statistical
report (continued)
Live-birth statistical
report (continued)

- *Type of birth, i.e., single or plural issue
- Weight at birth
- (ii) *Characteristics of parents*
 - Date of birth of father; if not available, age
 - *Date of birth of mother; if not available, age
 - Date of marriage (for legitimate births)
 - Industry
 - Literacy or level of formal education
 - *Number of children born to this mother
 - Occupation
 - *Place of usual residence (of mother)
 - Status (as employer, employee, etc.)

Death statistical report

- (2) **Death statistical report items**
 - (i) *Characteristics of event*
 - *Cause of death
 - *Certifier
 - *Date of occurrence
 - *Date of registration
 - *Place of occurrence
 - (ii) *Characteristics of decedent*
 - Age of surviving spouse (for married)
 - *Date of birth; if not available, age
 - Hospitalization
 - Industry
 - Legitimacy (for under one year of age)
 - Literacy or level of formal education
 - Marital status
 - Number of children born (for females of child-bearing age or over)
 - Occupation
 - *Place of usual residence
 - *Sex
 - Status (as employer, employee, etc.)

Fœtal-death statistical
report

- (3) **Fœtal-death statistical report items**
 - (i) *Characteristics of event or product*
 - Cause of fœtal death
 - Certifier or attendant
 - *Date of occurrence (of fœtal delivery)
 - *Date of registration
 - Hospitalization
 - *Legitimacy
 - *Period of gestation
 - *Place of occurrence
 - *Sex
 - *Type of birth, i.e., single or plural issue
 - Weight at delivery
 - (ii) *Characteristics of parents*
 - Date of birth of father; if not available, age
 - *Date of birth of mother; if not available, age
 - Date of marriage (for legitimate pregnancies)
 - Industry
 - Literacy or level of formal education
 - *Number of children born to this mother
 - Occupation
 - *Place of usual residence (of mother)
 - Status (as employer, employee, etc.)

STATISTICAL REPORTING

Pr. 309

(4) Marriage statistical report items

(i) *Characteristics of event*

- *Date of occurrence
- Date of registration
- *Place of occurrence

(ii) *Characteristics of bride and groom*

- *Date of birth; if not available, age
- Industry
- Literacy or level of formal education
- *Marital status
- Number of previous marriages
- Occupation
- *Place of usual residence
- Status (as employer, employee, etc.)

Content of statistical
report (*continued*)
Marriage statistical
report

(5) Divorce statistical report items

(i) *Characteristics of event*

- *Date of occurrence
- Date of registration
- *Place of occurrence

(ii) *Characteristics of divorcees*

- *Date of birth; if not available, age
- *Date of marriage
- Industry
- Literacy or level of formal education
- *Number of dependent children
- Number of previous marriages
- Occupation
- Place of occurrence of marriage
- *Place of usual residence
- Status (as employer, employee, etc.)

Divorce statistical
report

309. Definition of each item on the statistical report

(a) Each item on the statistical report should be accompanied by a clear, explicit, and simple definition for the guidance of the person recording the information.

(b) In order to achieve international comparability, definitions adopted should be in accordance with established international standards and, in so far as possible, with current population census practice in each country.

(c) Definitions which may operate to improve international comparability in connexion with the items suggested for inclusion in the statistical reports (Principle 308) are given below. Except where otherwise indicated, the characteristics should be reported as of the date of occurrence of the event.

(1) AGE (duration of life at death, at birth of child, at delivery of foetus, at marriage, at divorce) is the estimated or calculated interval between the date of birth and the date of occurrence of the event, expressed in the largest possible completed units of time, such as years, months, weeks, days or hours of life, as appropriate.

(2) ATTENDANT AT BIRTH is the physician, midwife, nurse, or other person who delivered the mother.

(3) BIRTH ORDER is a tabulation concept based on item (19), "Number of children born to this mother". For definitions, see Principle 410 (e) (5) and (20).

(4) CAUSE OF DEATH is the morbid condition or disease process, abnormality, injury or poisoning leading directly, or indirectly, to death. Symptoms or modes of dying such as heart failure, asthenia, etc., are not considered to be causes of death for statistical purposes. The *underlying*

Definition of statistical
items

Definition of statistical items (continued)

cause of death, which, rather than the direct or intermediate antecedent cause, is the one to be adopted as the main cause for tabulation of mortality statistics may be defined as (a) the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death, or (b) the circumstances of the accident or violence which produced the fatal injury.

(5) CERTIFIER is the person who certified the cause of death, i.e., the physician or surgeon who attended, the medical practitioner who examined the body, or the coroner, midwife, nurse, or layman who reported the cause.

(6) DATE OF BIRTH (of parents, of deceased, of bride and groom, of divorcees) should be expressed as year, month, and day of birth, that is, in detail equivalent to that given for "date of occurrence of event" in order that exact interval between the two dates may be determined in completed years, months, weeks, days, or hours of life, as required. If it is not possible to establish date of birth, give "age" as defined in (1) above.

(7) DATE OF MARRIAGE in connexion with legitimate births is the day, month, and year of the marriage of the parents of the child or foetus. For marriages being dissolved by divorce, it is the day, month, and year of the current marriage.

(8) DATE OF OCCURRENCE (of live birth, death, delivery of dead foetus, marriage or divorce) is the exact date when the event occurred, and should be expressed in terms of day, month, and year, and hour if appropriate.

(9) DATE OF REGISTRATION (of live birth, death, foetal death, marriage, or divorce) should be expressed as day, month, and year when the legal registration was made.

(10) DURATION OF MARRIAGE is a tabulation concept based on "date of marriage", item (7). For definition see Principle 410 (e) (28) and (29).

(11) HOSPITALIZATION refers to the actual place where the event occurred, as for example in a hospital, institution, private home, or other location.

(12) INDUSTRY (branch of economic activity) refers to the activity of the establishment in which an individual is employed, or the kind of business he operates. The time reference of the industry to be reported on vital records, as well as the treatment of persons who have never worked or who are retired, should be consistent with procedures adopted for population census purposes. (See also "Occupation", item (22) and "Status", item (26).)

(13) LEGITIMACY is the status of the child or dead foetus with respect to being legitimate, that is, considered as the lawful issue of a couple.

(14) LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION should aim to show the highest level of instruction to which the individual has attained in the country's regular educational system or its equivalent. If this information is confined to the population above a stated minimum age, the minimum should not be higher than twenty-five years. (See also "Literacy", item (15).)

(15) LITERACY is defined for purposes of international comparisons as ability both to read and to write a simple message in any one language. If this question is confined to the population above a stated minimum age, the minimum should not be higher than fifteen years. (See also "Level of formal education", item (14).)

(16) LIVE-BIRTH ORDER is a tabulation concept based on "Number of children born to this mother", item (19). For definition, see Principle 110 (e) (5).

(17) MARITAL STATUS should be expressed in such categories as are required for national purposes but in a manner which will be in con-

formity with the following concepts as applied to the event being reported: married; in stable *de facto* unions (consensually married); widowed, not remarried; divorced, not remarried; single—that is, not married, widowed, or divorced in the sense stated above. Should it be impossible to obtain information on consensual unions separately, they should be recorded as “married”.

(18) MARRIAGE BIRTH ORDER is a tabulation concept based on “Number of children born to this mother”, item (19). For definitions, see Principle 410 (e) (5) and (20).

(19) NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN TO THIS MOTHER is defined as “total issue”, that is, all children (*including this one* in the case of the live-birth or foetal-death report) born alive or born dead during the lifetime of this mother, and expressed in such a way as to distinguish (a) children now living, (b) children born alive and now dead, and (c) children born dead. In the case of plural issue, each child or foetus resulting from a confinement should be counted separately. For legitimate births, provision may be made to obtain information on how many children in (a), (b), and (c) above were issue of the current and, in some instances, of the previous marriages. If the distinction between (a), (b) and (c) above is not practicable, the country should endeavour to obtain information on “total live births to the mother”, or nearest approximation.

(20) NUMBER OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN is the total number of living children under 16 years of age dependent on either of the divorcees at the time the petition is filed.

(21) NUMBER OF PREVIOUS MARRIAGES (of persons marrying or of divorcees) is the number of marriages entered into *before* the one contracted at this marriage, or *before* the one ending in this divorce, irrespective of whether the last previous marriage was dissolved by death or divorce.

(22) OCCUPATION is the trade, profession, or type of work performed by the individual. For vital records, the time reference and treatment of retired and pre-labour force individuals should correspond, as in the case of “industry”, with the concept adopted for the census of population. (See also “Industry,” item (12) and “Status,” item (26).)

(23) PERIOD OF GESTATION is the number of completed weeks which have elapsed between the first day of the last menstrual period and the date of delivery, irrespective of whether the product of conception was live-born or born without evidence of life.

(24) PLACE OF OCCURRENCE is the geographic locality where the birth, death, delivery of a dead foetus, marriage, or divorce occurred. This information should be given in enough detail to enable tabulations to be made for at least the largest administrative subdivisions of the country and for such smaller administrative subdivisions as may be required for national use.

(25) PLACE OF USUAL RESIDENCE is the geographic locality where the person concerned with the vital event usually lives. This information should be given in enough detail to enable tabulations to be made for at least the largest administrative subdivisions of the country and for such smaller administrative subdivisions as may be required for national use. (Method of determining “place of residence” for purposes of tabulation is given in Principle 409 (b).)

(26) STATUS (as employer, employee, etc.) refers to the status of an individual with respect to his employment, that is, whether he is an employer, worker on own account, employee, or unpaid family worker. (See also “Industry”, item (12) and “Occupation”, item (22).)

Definition of statistical
items (continued)

(27) TOTAL BIRTH ORDER is a tabulation concept based on "Number of children born to this mother", item (19). For definitions, see Principle 410 (e) (20).

(28) TYPE OF BIRTH refers to the single or plural nature of the issue of the pregnancy to which the statistical report relates. Each live-born infant or dead foetus should be characterized as single, twin, triplet, and so forth, and, for each member of a plural birth, provision should be made to indicate the condition of the other member(s) (mates) with respect to being born alive or dead (foetal death), and, if desired, sex.

(29) TYPE OF CERTIFICATION is a tabulation concept based on the identity of the certifier, item (5) above. (See also Principle 410 (e) (11).)

(30) UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH—see "Cause of death", item (4).

(31) WEIGHT of a live-born child at birth or of a dead-born foetus at delivery should be the weight determined immediately after delivery, and should be expressed in grammes to a degree of significance which will allow a classification of 500-gramme intervals to be made.

PART 4

PRINCIPLES FOR COMPILATION OF VITAL STATISTICS (401-412)

401. Goal of the compilation programme

Goal of the compilation

The compilation of vital statistics should have as its minimum general goal (1) the provision of total monthly or quarterly summary counts of live births and deaths (and of foetal deaths, marriages and divorces if these are included in the collection programme) on a time schedule prompt enough to provide information for administrative or other needs; and (2) the production of detailed annual tabulations of such type and on such time schedule as will make possible their effective use for the scientific analysis of the interrelationship between demographic, economic and social factors, for planning, operating, and evaluating public health programmes, and for other purposes as required. In so far as possible, such statistics should be comparable on an international basis and lend themselves to international analysis.

402. Tabulation area¹—geographic aspect

Tabulation area

(a) In accordance with individual national conditions and needs, specific standards for completeness of registration and data coverage should be set up, and every effort should be made to ensure that the data for the entire national territory meet these standards.

(b) Where it is impossible to secure figures for the entire national territory which meet the predetermined degree of completeness with respect to registration and data coverage, detailed tabulations should be made only for data from geographic areas which meet the specified conditions. Separate but regular tabulations should be made for data from areas falling below the determined criteria, and efforts should be made to improve registration in the sub-standard areas with a view to including them as soon as possible in the "national tabulation area".

(c) In such cases where the national tabulation area is less than the national territory, special care should be taken to explain limitations of coverage and the implications thereof wherever the statistics appear.

403. Tabulation coverage—ethnic aspect

Tabulation coverage

(a) Every effort should be made to ensure that national vital statistics refer to the total population of the country.

(b) Where registration of vital events among important population groups is very incomplete and/or the quantity or quality of original data is very deficient, separate tabulations may have to be made for the various segments of the population and an explanation of the limitations in coverage given wherever the statistics appear.

(c) In countries where the social and economic characteristics of large segments of the population vary greatly, it is recommended that, in so far as possible, the identity of each important population group be maintained in the tabulations. (See also Principle 308 (b).)

404. Organization for compilation of national vital statistics

Centralized compilation

National vital statistics should be compiled on a centralized basis by a national agency specifically charged with this statistical function.

¹ "Tabulation area" is used to represent that geographic area which meets certain national criteria for completeness of registration and data coverage, and on which, therefore, national tabulations are based.

405. National compilation from individual statistical reports

(a) National vital statistics should be compiled in such a way as to obtain uniformity of classification and tabulation and to permit flexibility and adaptability in tabulation to meet national and international requirements.

(b) Experience has shown that the procedure best adapted to produce the highest degree of accuracy, uniformity, and flexibility is centralized compilation from individual reports which contain full information necessary for statistical purposes. (See also Principle 404 above).

"Cut-off date"

406. Tabulation coverage—"cut-off date"

(a) Final annual tabulations should be made on the basis of statistical reports received before a specified date known as a "cut-off date", determined by each country on the basis of national factors such as the period allowed for registration and the channels for statistical reporting.

(b) Reports received after the cut-off date, which will include reports on events which have been registered by any means at varying times after the expiration of the legal maximum declaration period, should be tabulated separately by date of occurrence in order that they may provide a means by which analysis of the problem of delayed registration, declared registration, and delayed reporting may be made with a view to initiating appropriate remedial measures, if required. Unless the volume is very large, extensive detailed national tabulations would not ordinarily be made on these reports.

Calendar periods

407. Tabulation by calendar periods

Final tabulations should refer to a Gregorian calendar period, i.e., solar month, quarter, or year, as appropriate. If for reasons of climate or other considerations national vital statistics are more meaningful on a different time base, provision should be made for supplying solar calendar-period tabulations in addition.

"Date of occurrence"
versus "date of
registration"

408. Tabulation by date of occurrence or date of registration

(a) Final tabulations for any calendar period should be based on events which occurred during that period and not on those registered. Should it be administratively necessary to tabulate final figures by "date of registration" rather than "date of occurrence", evaluation studies should be made to determine the degree to which tabulations by date of registration approximate those by date of occurrence, and it is desirable that the analyses of this relationship be published.

(b) For purposes of current weekly, monthly, or quarterly summaries which must be compiled rapidly, counts referring to date of registration may be used but in this case also it should be demonstrated that analyses based on events which are registered during a period can be interpreted in terms of those which occurred.

"Place-of-occurrence"
and "place-of-resi-
dence" tabulations

409. Tabulation by place of occurrence and place of residence

(a) Final tabulations for geographic areas less than the total national territory and for cities, should be made according to place of usual residence. In addition, such place-of-occurrence tabulations as are required for administrative or other purposes should be made.

(b) Determination of "place of residence"⁸ for purposes of tabulation should be made as follows:

⁸ The definition of "residence" upon which the allocation of vital events to place of residence is made should not be a legalistic one but one which will allow vital statistics to be related to corresponding population data.

Live births	} Place of residence of mother
Fœtal deaths		
Infant deaths		
Deaths	 Place of residence of decedent
Marriages	 Place of residence of groom
Divorces	 Place of residence of husband

“Place-of-occurrence”
and “place-of-resi-
dence” tabulations
(continued)

(c) Tabulation of data for the national territory should relate in general to data on events occurring within the national boundaries, although under certain circumstances, as for example during war years, provision may need to be made for including in the national tabulations data for deaths among the armed forces stationed outside the national boundaries.

(d) Special consideration should be given to obtaining corresponding population figures for the computation of rates.

410. Annual tabulation programme for national and international purposes

Tabulation programme

(a) The annual tabulation programme for national and international purposes should provide data in such classifications as are required for national study of the incidence, time trends and geographical differentials of the most important characteristics of fertility, mortality, nuptiality, and divorce, and the exploration of their interrelationships. It should also seek to meet the requirements of international agencies and, in general, be in agreement with the recommendations for achieving international comparability.

(b) The design of the tabulation programme should take into consideration the maximum utilization of information available, the desirability of the tabulations, the practicability of performing the counting operations, using the tabulation facilities ordinarily available to the statistical services of the countries, and the suitability of the arrangement for deriving tables for presentation.

(c) A suggested basic annual programme for the tabulation of live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages and divorces, including suggested standard classification schemes, is given in paragraph (e) below. This programme, which makes use of only the first priority (*) items in Principle 308, consists of tabulations which are of major general importance for purposes of demographic analysis. However, it should not be overlooked that vital statistics of a country are more useful to that country and for general scientific purposes if they are tabulated in relation to the significant social and economic groups which are identified within the country (see Principle 403). The basic tabulation programme in paragraph (e) does not include such tabulations, and many countries will wish to compile their vital statistics also in relation to other variables given in paragraphs (b) and (d) of Principle 308 and by “urban-rural” groupings or for localities classified by size, etc.

(d) It is emphasized that the tabulations outlined below do not constitute a working programme of operating specifications. The manner in which these data are to be obtained from the tabulations will vary according to the types of equipment available. Hence, in designing operating specifications, these suggested tabulations of data will need to be combined in such a way as to obtain the maximum utilization of equipment at hand. Neither are the suggested tabulations a publication programme because it may not be desirable to publish annually all of the classifications indicated below, or it may be inexpedient to publish the data in these forms. Therefore, these tabulations represent only the cross-classifications and counts which are considered desirable for an annual programme in each country.

(e) An annual tabulation programme based on the first priority (*) statistical items listed in Principle 308 and defined in Principle 309 is given in this paragraph. Unless otherwise specified and as applicable, it

Tabulation programme
(continued)

is suggested that the tabulations outlined below be made for the following geographic areas: (1) the country as a whole; (2) each major civil division; and (3) each very important city. "Residence" is determined as set forth in Principle 409.

Live-birth tabulations

- (1) **Live births classified by place of occurrence**
(Tabulate also for each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division.)
Classification
Place of occurrence: each major civil division, each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division, each very important city in the country.
- (2) **Resident live births classified by attendant at birth**
(Tabulate also for each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division.)
Classification
Attendant: physician, midwife, nurse, other, not stated.
- (3) **Resident live births classified by month of occurrence**
Classification
Month of occurrence: calendar month.
- (4) **Resident live births cross-classified by sex and legitimacy**
Classifications
Sex: male, female.
Legitimacy: legitimate, illegitimate, not stated.
- (5) **Resident live births cross-classified by age of mother and live-birth order⁹**
Classifications
Age: under 15 years, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50 and over, not stated.
Live-birth order: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th . . . 10th and over, not stated.

Death tabulations

- (6) **Deaths classified by place of occurrence**
(Tabulate also for each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division.)
Classification
Place of occurrence: each major civil division, each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division, each very important city in the country.
- (7) **Deaths classified by place of residence of decedent**
(Tabulate also for each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division.)
Classification
Place of residence: each major civil division, each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division, each very important city in the country.
- (8) **Resident deaths cross-classified by month of occurrence and selected causes of death**
Classifications
Month of occurrence: calendar month.
Causes of death: selected underlying causes.¹⁰

⁹ Live-birth order is the numerical order of the child (the report of whose birth is being tabulated) in relation to all previous live-born issue of the mother, irrespective of whether pregnancies were nuptial or extra-nuptial. It is computed on the basis of information given under item (19) of Principle 309, that is, "Number of children born to this mother" (a) now living, and (b) born alive and now dead. Should it be desirable to compute live-birth order solely on nuptial or legitimate issue, it is suggested that the term "marriage live-birth order" be adopted for this modified index.

¹⁰ Causes of death to be selected are those which are not only important to the country as leading causes of death but which also have significant seasonal variation. Categories should be selected from the "Detailed List" of the *Manual of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries, and Causes of Death*. Sixth Revision of the International Lists of Diseases and Causes of Death, Adopted 1948, Volume 1. (Bulletin of the World Health Organization, Supplement 1, Geneva, Switzerland, 1948), pp. 1-42.

- (9) Deaths cross-classified by sex, age, and cause
(Tabulate only for the *country* as a whole.)
Classifications
Sex: male, female.
Age: under 1 year, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 . . .
85 and over, not stated.
Cause of death: Intermediate List of 150 Causes.¹¹
- (10) Resident deaths cross-classified by sex, age, and cause
Classifications
Sex: male, female.
Age: under 1 year, 1-4, 5-14, 15-24, 25-34 . . . 65-74, 75 and over,
not stated.
Cause: Abbreviated List of 50 Causes.¹²
- (11) Resident deaths cross-classified by type of certification and cause
Classifications
Type of certification:¹³ medical, other, not stated.
Cause: Intermediate List of 150 Causes.¹¹
- (12) Infant deaths (under 1 year of age) classified by place of occurrence
(Tabulate also for each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division.)
Classification
Place of occurrence: each major civil division, each geographic
unit smaller than the major civil division, each very important
city in the country.
- (13) Infant deaths (under 1 year of age) classified by place of residence of mother
(Tabulate also for each geographic unit smaller than the major civil division.)
Classification
Place of residence: each major civil division, each geographic
unit smaller than the major civil division, each very important
city in the country.
- (14) Resident infant deaths (under 1 year of age) cross-classified by age and
month of occurrence
Classifications
Age: under 28 days, under 1 year, not stated.
Month of occurrence: calendar month.
- (15) Resident infant deaths (under 1 year of age) cross-classified by sex and age
Classifications
Sex: male, female.
Age: under 1 day, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 days; 7-13, 14-20, 21-27, 28 days
to under 2 months; 2, 3, 4 . . . 11 months; not stated.
- (16) Resident infant deaths (under 1 year of age) classified by cause of death
Classification
Causes of death: selected underlying causes.¹⁴
- (17) Foetal deaths classified by place of occurrence
Classification
Place of occurrence: each major civil division, each very impor-
tant city in the country.

Tabulation programme
(*continued*)
Death tabulations
(*continued*)

Foetal-death tabulations

¹¹ *Manual of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries, and Causes of Death*. Op. cit., pp. 355-360.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 361-2.

¹³ In order to give some indication of the specific type of medical certification, it is suggested that, if possible, a distinction be made between certification by the physician or surgeon who *attended* the deceased at the last illness and certification by a medical practitioner who only *examined* the body after death.

¹⁴ Causes of death to be selected are those which are important as causes of infant mortality. Categories should be selected from the "Detailed List" of the *Manual of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries, and Causes of Death*, op. cit., pp. 1-42.

Tabulation programme
(continued)

Fœtal-death tabulations
(continued)

- (18) Resident fœtal deaths classified by sex and period of gestation

Classification

Period of gestation: under 20 completed weeks, 20-27 completed weeks, 28-36 completed weeks, 37 completed weeks and not stated.

- (19) Resident late
- ¹⁵
- fœtal deaths cross-classified by sex and legitimacy

Classifications

Sex: male, female, not stated.

Legitimacy: legitimate, illegitimate, not stated.

- (20) Resident late
- ¹⁵
- fœtal deaths cross-classified by age of mother and total birth order
- ¹⁶

Classifications

Age: under 15 years, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50 and over, not stated.

Total birth order: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th . . . 10th and over, not stated.

Confinement
tabulation

- (21) Confinements
- ¹⁷
- cross-classified by type of birth and status of issue with respect to being born alive or dead

Classifications

Type of birth: single, twin, triplet, quadruplet, etc., and not stated.

Status of issue:

Single — live birth,
 fœtal death;

Twin — 2 live births,
 1 live birth and 1 fœtal death,
 2 fœtal deaths;

Triplet — 3 live births,
 2 live births and 1 fœtal death,
 1 live birth and 2 fœtal deaths,
 3 fœtal deaths;

and so forth.

Marriage tabulations

- (22) Resident
- ¹⁸
- marriages classified by month of occurrence

Classification

Month of occurrence: calendar month.

- (23) Resident marriages cross-classified by age of bride and age of groom

Classification

Age: under 15 years, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 . . . 75 and over, not stated.

- (24) Resident marriages cross-classified by previous marital status of bride and previous marital status of groom

Classification

Marital status: single, widowed, divorced (or equivalent). In addition, "married" for males if polygamy is allowed.

¹⁵ "Late fœtal deaths" refer to those of 28 completed weeks of gestation and over.

¹⁶ "Total birth order" is the numerical order of the fœtus (the report of whose death is being tabulated) in relation to all previous issue of the mother, irrespective of whether the issue were live-born or dead fœtuses, or whether pregnancies were nuptial or extra-nuptial. It is computed on information given in item (19) of Principle 309, that is "Number of children born to this mother", or "total issue". Should it be desirable to restrict "total birth order" to nuptial or legitimate issue only, it is suggested that the term "marriage total birth order" be adopted for this modified index.

¹⁷ "Confinements", as used here, is synonymous with "deliveries", "maternities", or "total cases of birth". The number of confinements is the same as the number of individuals (live-born or still-born) in the case of single births, but is of course less than the total number of live births plus fœtal deaths in the case of plural issue, inasmuch as the term refers to the "sets" of twins or triplets.

¹⁸ Tabulations should be made by residence of the bride as well as by residence of the groom.

COMPILATION

Pr. 411-412

- (25) Marriages cross-classified by previous marital status and age of participants.
 Tabulate separately for bride and for groom
 (Tabulate only for the *country* as a whole.)
Classifications

Tabulation progra
(continued)
Marriage tabulatio
(continued)

Marital status: single, widowed, divorced (or equivalent). In addition, "married" for males if polygamy is allowed.
 Age: under 15 years, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 . . . 75 and over, not stated.

- (26) Divorces classified by place of occurrence
Classification

Divorce tabulations

Place of occurrence: each major civil division, each very important city in the country.

- (27) Resident divorces cross-classified by age of wife and age of husband
Classification

Age: under 15 years, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 . . . 75 and over, not stated.

- (28) Divorces cross-classified by duration of marriage¹⁹ and age of divorcees.
 Tabulate separately for husband and for wife
 (Tabulate only for the *country* as a whole.)
Classifications

Age: under 15 years, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29 . . . 75 and over, not stated.

Duration of marriage: under 1 year, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 years, 10-14, 15-19, 20 years and over, not stated.

- (29) Divorces cross-classified by number of dependent children and duration of marriage¹⁹
 (Tabulate only for the *country* as a whole.)
Classifications,

Number of dependent children: none, 1 child, 2 children . . . 7 and over, not stated.

Duration of marriage: under 1 year, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 years, 10-14, 15-19, 20 years and over, not stated.

411. Tabulations necessary for the administration of the vital registration system

In addition to the tabulations mentioned in Principle 410 (e), provision should be made to tabulate items which evaluate the efficiency of the registration system. Such tabulations would be utilized in the analysis of vital statistics and would serve as a guide for the improvement of services.

412. Provision of tabulations to meet local needs

(a) The national tabulation programme carried out by a national office of vital statistics may need to be supplemented by summary tabulations, made at the local or regional level by the services concerned, which would have as their objective the prompt provision of information on subjects requiring immediate administrative action.

(b) Provision should be made at the national level to provide, on request, detailed geographic tabulations which may not be included in the routine national tabulation programme.

Tabulations for local areas

¹⁹"Duration of marriage" is the time, in completed years, elapsed between the exact date of the marriage being dissolved and the date of the divorce.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of terms

- Analysis (statistical)* is the examination of data by the statistical method to distinguish the component parts or elements, to investigate the nature and relation to each other and to the whole, and to interpret the quantitative, causal, or probable relations in terms of the problem under study.
- Assembling* is the process of gathering or bringing together statistics compiled on a decentralized basis.
- Classification* is the systematic arrangement (sorting) of units into the established mutually exclusive categories or classes of a definite classification scheme, designed for a specific characteristic of the unit.
- Collection* is the process of gathering individual reports on vital events for the purpose of compiling statistics from them.
- Compilation* is the process of condensation of information by classifying and tabulating statistical reports in various categories or classes with the object of producing vital statistics according to a predetermined programme.
- Consolidation* is the process of combining into one aggregate statistics compiled by different agents.
- Distribution* is the process of disseminating statistics among consumers, usually in the form of published documents.
- Presentation* is the making available of statistics, through publication or other means of dissemination.
- Recording (statistical)* is the inscription, for statistical purposes, of specified items of information with respect to a registered event.
- Register (noun)* is a collection, list, or file of records arranged according to some filing scheme.
- Register (verb)*—see “registration”.
- Registrar* is the official authorized to register the occurrence of a vital event and to record the required details with respect to it.
- Registration* is the legal recording with the authorized officials of the occurrence of an event, together with certain identifying or descriptive characteristics of the event.
- Registration method* is the continuous and permanent, compulsory recording of the occurrence and the characteristics of vital events primarily for their value as legal documents and secondarily for their usefulness as a source of statistics.
- Registration record* is the legal document which attests to the occurrence and to certain characteristics of a vital event.
- Registration statistics*—see “vital statistics”.
- Report (statistical)* is the record containing the items of information with respect to a vital event, that is, the “raw” materials systematically arranged, which are required for vital statistics.
- Reporting (statistical)* is the transmission of statistical reports on vital events to the agency responsible for compilation of statistics on these events.
- Tabulation* is the counting of units in each category of a specific classification scheme and the systematic arrangement (seriation) of the results in such tabular form as will serve the needs of the investigation.

GLOSSARY

Vital event is a live birth, death, foetal death, marriage, divorce, adoption, legitimation, recognition, annulment, or legal separation.

Vital record—see “registration record”.

Vital statistics are the facts, systematically collected and compiled in numerical form, relating to or derived from records of vital events.

Glossary (*continued*)

SUBJECT-MATTER INDEX

(Numbers refer to Principles in which the subject is treated.)

- Accuracy of data, improvement of, 306
- Adoption, statistical definition of, 202
- Annual tabulation programme for national and international purposes, 410
- Annulment, statistical definition of, 202,
- Calendar periods, tabulation by, 407
- Centralization:
of collection, 303
of compilation, 404, 405
of registration, 205
- Certificate of cause of death, medical, 307
- Certification of cause of death, 307
- Channelling statistical reports, 303, 304
- Collection of statistical reports:
control of, 304
organization for, 303
- Compilation of national vital statistics:
from individual statistical reports, 405
goal of, 401
organization for, 404
- Completeness:
improvement of, 306
of coverage, 305
of registration, 402
of reporting, 301, 302
- Compulsory nature of registration, 203
- Confidentiality, 103
- Confinements, suggested tabulation of, 410
- Content of statistical report on a vital event, 308
- Control of receipt of statistical reports, 304
- Co-ordination, 105, 205
- Cost of current registration, 211
- "Cut-off date," 406
- Data, improvement of completeness and accuracy, 306
- "Date of occurrence" as a basis for tabulations, 408
- "Date of registration" as a basis for tabulations, 408
- Death:
statistical definition of, 202
statistical report, items suggested for, 308
tabulations, 410
- "Declared events," provision for registration of, 214
- Definition of:
adoption, 202
annulment, 202
death, 202
- divorce, 202
each item on the registration record, 216
each item on the statistical report, 309
foetal death, 202
legal separation, 202
legitimation, 202
live birth, 202
marriage, 202
recognition, 202
stillbirth, 202
vital events, 202
vital statistics system, 101
- Delayed registration, provision for, 213
- Divorce:
statistical definition of, 202
statistical report, items suggested for, 308
tabulations, 410
- Duties of registrar, 207, 305
- Efficiency:
of registrars, 208
of registration system, 411
- Evaluation of the vital statistics system, 106
- Foetal death:
statistical definition of, 202
statistical report, items suggested for, 308
tabulations, 410
- Form and content of the registration record, 215
- Form of the statistical report on a vital event, 307
- Function of a vital statistics system, 102
- Goal of the compilation programme, 401
- Improvement of completeness and accuracy of data reported for statistical purposes, 306
- Incentives to registration, 204, 211
- Individuality of statistical reports, 307
- Infant death tabulations, 410
- Informant:
designation of, 209
duties of, 209
education of, 306
- International comparability, 309, 401, 410
- Items on statistical report, definition of each, 309
- Items suggested for statistical report of:
death, 308
divorce, 308
foetal death, 308
- live birth, 308
marriage, 308
- Legal separation, statistical definition of, 202
- Legitimation, statistical definition of, 202
- Live birth:
statistical definition of, 202
statistical report, items suggested for, 308
tabulations, 410
- Local area tabulations, 412
- Marriage:
statistical definition of, 202
statistical report, items suggested for, 308
tabulations, 410
- Medical certificate of cause of death, form of, 307
- Medical certification of cause of death, responsibility for, 209
- National Committees on Vital and Health Statistics, 105
- National tabulation area, 402
- National vital statistics:
form of report from which compiled, 405
organization for compilation of, 404
- National vital statistics systems, responsibility for establishment, 104
- Number and size of primary registration units, 206
- Organization:
for collection of statistical reports, 303
for compilation of national vital statistics, 404
for registration at local and national level, 205
- Place of record linkage (population registers) in the vital statistics system, 109
- Place of registration, 210
- Place of residence, 210
determination of, for tabulation purposes, 409
- Place of residence versus place of occurrence in tabulations, 409
- Place of sampling in the vital statistics system, 107
- Place of special surveys in the vital statistics system, 108
- Place where registration is to be made, 210
- Population registers, place of in the vital statistics system, 109
- Presumed deaths, 214
- Primary registration units, number and size of, 206

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SUBJECT-MATTER INDEX

- Priorities:
 for collection of information, 308
 for registration of vital events, 201
- Proof of registration, 211
- Querying procedures, 306
- Recognition, statistical definition of, 202
- Recording statistical information, 305
- Record linkage in the vital statistics system, 109
- Registers, 215, 216
- Registrar:
 duties of, 207, 305
 improving efficiency of, 208
 registration responsibilities, 207
 statistical responsibilities, 305
- Registration:
 cost of, 211
 "declared events," 214
 delayed, 213
 incentives to, 204
 informant, 209
 organization for, 205
 place where made, 210
 proof of, 211
 time allowed, 212
- Registration method, definition of, 102, 201
- Registration record:
 definition of each item on, 216
 form and content of, 215
- Registration system, efficiency of, 411
- Registration units, number and size of, 206
- Sampling in the vital statistics system, 107
- Size of primary registration units, 206
- Statistical reporting area, geographic and ethnic aspects, 302
- Statistical reporting, coverage, 301
- Statistical reports:
 contents of, 308
 control of receipt of, 304
 definition of each item on, 309
 form of, 307
 improvement of, 306
 individuality of, 307
 items suggested for:
 death, 308
 divorce, 308
 foetal death, 308
 live birth, 308
 marriage, 308
 uniformity of, 307
- Stillbirth, statistical definition of, 202
- Surveys in the vital statistics system, 108
- Tabulation area, geographic aspect, 402
- Tabulation by:
 calendar periods, 407
 date of occurrence or date of registration, 408
 place of occurrence and place of residence, 409
- Tabulation coverage:
 "cut-off date," 406
 ethnic aspect, 403
- Tabulation programme for national and international purposes, 410, 411, 412
- Tabulations proposed for:
 confinements, 410
 deaths, 410
 divorces, 410
 foetal deaths, 410
 live births, 410
 marriages, 410
- Time allowed for current registration, 212
- Training of registrars, 208, 306
- Uniformity:
 in classification and tabulation, 405
 in form of statistical report, 307
 in registration records, 215
- Vital events on which data should be collected by registration method, 201
- Vital statistics system:
 co-ordination of, 105
 definition of, 101
 evaluation of, 106
 function of, 102
 place of record linkage (population registers) in, 109
 place of sampling in, 107
 place of special surveys in, 108
 responsibilities for, 104

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

	<i>Page</i>
Background	1
Concepts underlying the Principles	2
Applicability of Principles	2
Uses of vital statistics	3

Part 1

GENERAL PRINCIPLES (101-109)

101. Definition of a vital statistics system	4
102. Function of the vital statistics system	4
103. Confidentiality of registration records and statistical reports	4
104. Designation of responsibilities for the vital statistics system	4
105. Co-ordination between agencies with responsibilities in the vital statistics system	4
106. Critical evaluation of the vital statistics system	5
107. Place of sampling in the vital statistics system	5
108. Place of special surveys in the vital statistics system	5
109. Place of record linkage (population registers) in the vital statistics system	5

Part 2

PRINCIPLES FOR LEGAL REGISTRATION OF VITAL EVENTS IN SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO VITAL STATISTICS (201-216)

201. Vital events on which data should be collected by the registration method	6
202. Definition for statistical purposes of each event on which data may be collected by the registration method	6
203. Compulsory nature of registration	7
204. Incentives to registration	7
205. Organization for registration at local and national level	7
206. Number and size of primary registration units	8
207. The registrar—his duties and responsibilities with respect to registration	8
208. Improving the efficiency of registrars	8
209. Designation of legally responsible informant	8
210. Place where registration is to be made	8
211. Cost of current registration	8
212. Time allowed for current registration	8
213. Provision for delayed registration	9
214. Provision for registration of "declared events"	9
215. Form and content of the registration record	9
216. Definition of each item on the registration record	9

Part 3

PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECORDING, REPORTING, AND COLLECTING OF DATA FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES (301-309)

301. Statistical reporting—coverage	10
302. Statistical reporting area—geographic and ethnic aspects	10
303. Organization for collection of statistical reports	10

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