

Dear colleague,

Thank you very much for your participation at the forthcoming United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Guidelines on the Legislative Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management. This communication is intended to provide you with more comprehensive information about the work on civil registration, vital statistics and identity management conducted at the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

UNSD is mandated to develop the methodological framework for civil registration, vital statistics and, lately, identity management under the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The essential purpose of the programme is to ensure universal, continuous, mandatory registration of all vital events occurring in the country (births, deaths, and other events), that is a source of reliable, regular and comprehensive small area vital statistics and provides legal identity to all – in all the countries of the world.

In that context, the attached draft *Guidelines on the Legislative Framework for Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management* represents one of the components of the new framework, that was initiated in 2014 by publishing the *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*. It is available at the following link: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles\\_and\\_Recommendations/CRVS/M19Rev3-E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles_and_Recommendations/CRVS/M19Rev3-E.pdf). These principles and recommendations represent the basic international standard for civil registration and vital statistics, and now extend to the interoperability with the identity management systems. It is based on the concept that the legal identity of each individual is established by issuing a birth certificate upon the occurrence of birth and is retired by issuing the certificate of death.

The second piece of this framework is contained in the *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance, Revision 1* available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/crvs/crvs-mgt-E.pdf>. This handbook elaborates in much more detail the holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management, advising all the countries to implement this model that will result in universal registration of vital events, regular and comprehensive vital statistics and legal identity for all, including, later in the life of each individual, biometric characteristics linked to legal identity.

The third piece of the framework refers to the attached *Guidelines*. Without the proper legislative framework, it would be very difficult to implement fully the internationally recommended principles for civil registration, vital statistics and identity management. Thus, the attached Guidelines need to be read in the conjunction with the first two pieces, as well as in the context of the previous version issued by UNSD in 1998: the *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Preparation of a Legal Framework*, available at: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/crvs/SeriesF\\_71-E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/crvs/SeriesF_71-E.pdf). This previous version has now being updated with the attached *Guidelines*; yet, it contains a model Civil Registration Law that is still relevant and can be used as a reference.

The essential purpose of the forthcoming Expert Group Meeting is to carefully and meticulously review the attached *Guidelines*, primarily from the perspective of the implementation at national level. The meeting will go through the guidelines para by para, after first summoning general comments and suggestions.

While preparing for the Expert Group Meeting by going methodically through the attached *Guidelines*, please note the following:

- The text was not officially edited. This may result in typographical or linguistic errors and omissions. While preparing your comments and interventions, please disregard these, unless they are so blatant to completely change the meaning of the text. The text will be subjected to the official editing once it is cleared by the expert group meeting.
- The text contains a number of boxes in each chapter. Some of the boxes are complete in terms of content; others have just a title indicating the potential content of the box – these are used as placeholders and your contribution in filling each of these with the appropriate examples is most welcome. Also, please disregard the boxes' numbering; it will be adjusted at the final stages.
- There are portions of text marked in yellow – these are used as place-pointers for cross-referencing to the proper paragraph or footnote once the final numbering is complete; please disregard those as well.

We would appreciate very much, while preparing for the Expert Group Meeting, to take note of your expected contribution:

- ❖ General comments on the draft *Guidelines*: are there issues that are missing, yet are critical for the legal framework? Is there unnecessary elaboration of topics that should not be covered? Is the general approach to the *Guidelines* appropriate and adequate? Should there be more discussion on a specific issue?
- ❖ Specific comments. As mentioned above, the meeting will review the draft *Guidelines* para by para. Please prepare specific comments as you see fit on each para, section, or chapter. You may prepare them in writing in advance of the meeting and these will be introduced at the meeting itself; you may present them orally at the meeting and these will be reflected in the final version of the draft; or you may have them as general notes that will transform into specific comments based on the discussion at the meeting.
- ❖ National examples. The *Guidelines* aspire to cover as much as possible national successful practices in developing and implementing legal framework for the holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management. Examples in that respect from your countries and regional or international settings are invaluable. Thus, please identify parts of the *Guidelines* that are most suitable for inclusion of successful practice in your countries and provide them in the format of the text box, annex, illustration or in any other shape you feel is appropriate and these will be then included in the final version.

We appreciate all your efforts and commitments very much in this phase of preparing for the UN Expert Group Meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any question, clarification or suggestion.