

Civil registration and vital statistics in the context of COVID- 19

Webinar series organized by:

Global CRVS Group

UN Legal Identity Agenda Task Force

Pacific Community and the Economic Commission for Africa

Programme

Webinar No	Theme	Date and time
1.	International standards, methodological framework for civil registration and vital statistics and the UN guidelines for maintaining civil registration during the COVID-19 pandemic	17.06.2020
2.	Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on civil registration and vital statistics	23.06.2020
3.	Country experiences on the impact of COVID 19 on CRVS system and planning for the future <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand• Australia• Malaysia	30.06.2020

Presentation outline and key themes of webinar 1

1. An overview of the purpose, key features and functions of civil registration and vital statistics systems
2. The United Nations holistic approach to legal identity.
3. Reflections on the demands posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and how CRVS systems can help address/respond to these
4. UN guidelines for maintaining civil registration during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. Purpose, key features and functions of civil registration and vital statistics systems



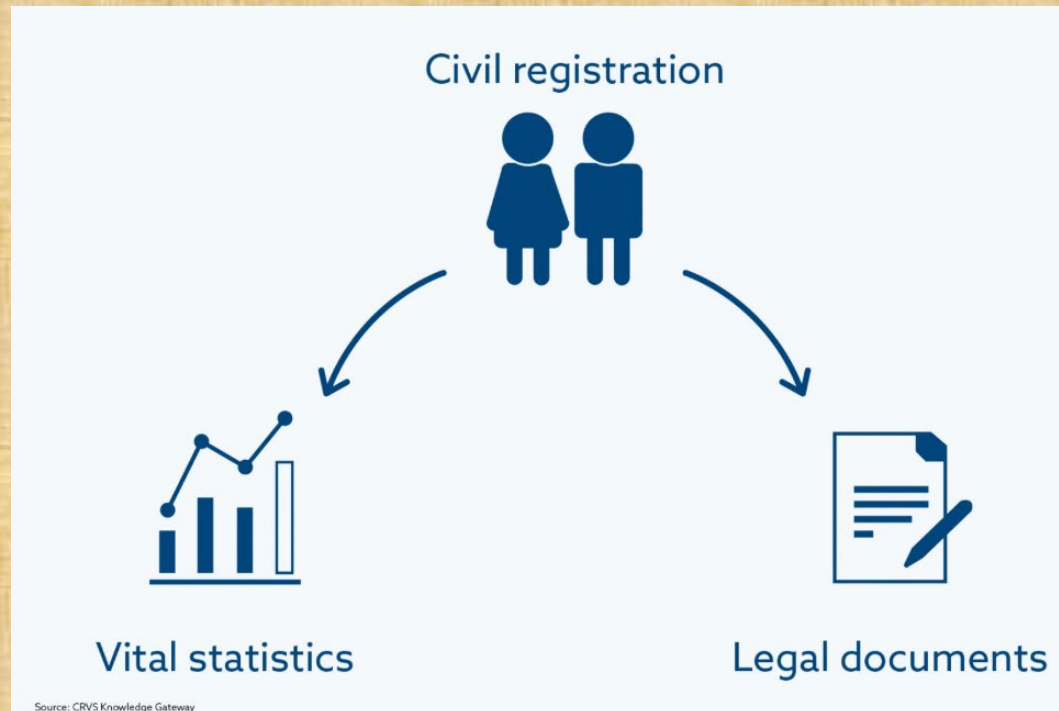
Definition and key features of the civil registration method

Civil registration: The procedure employed in gathering the basic information on the incidence and characteristics of vital events that occur in the population of a country (or area) within a specified time period, upon which the preparation of vital records with legal value and the production of vital statistics are based.

- **Key features:** *Compulsory, Universal, continuous and permanent, confidential, full coverage*

Role of civil registration

“The essential purpose of civil registration is to furnish legal instruments of direct interest to individuals.” i.e. to provide individuals with special probatory instruments which allow them to prove, with ironclad certainty, the facts relating their existence, identity, and personal and family situation.



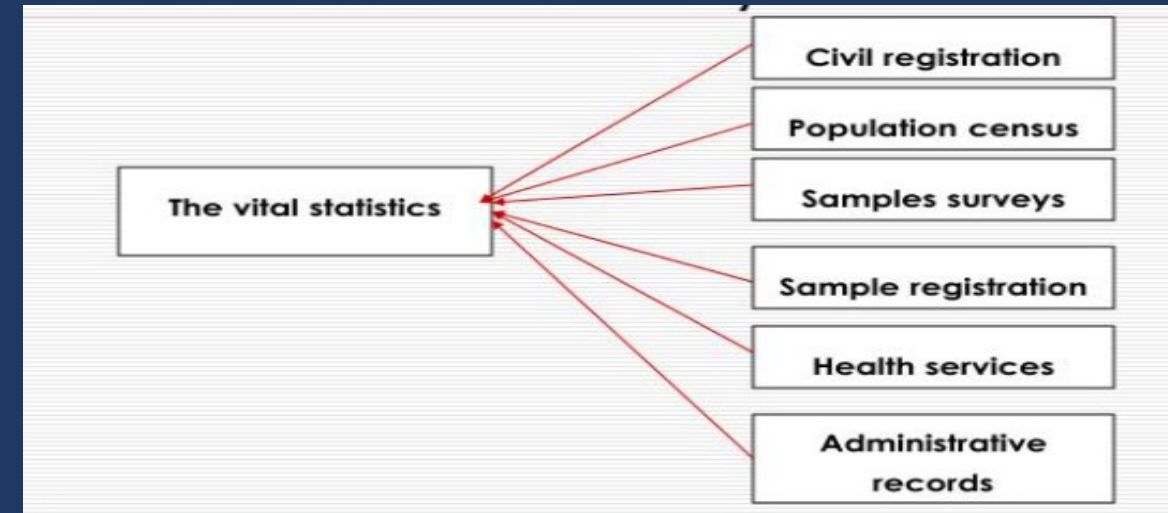
- 1. Legal and protective advantages to individuals**
- 2. Administrative uses**
- 3. Statistical uses**

Sources of Vital Statistics

Vital statistics

Vital statistics: the collection of statistics on vital events in a lifetime of a person as well as relevant characteristics of the events themselves and of the person and persons concerned. Vital statistics provide crucial and critical information on the population in a country.

Vital events: *live births, deaths, foetal death, marriage, divorce, Annulment, separation, Adoption, Legitimation, Recognition*



	Level of estimate	Civil registration system	Demographic surveillance sites	Sample registration systems	Population censuses	Household sample surveys
Births	National	Yes	No	Yes	Maybe*	Yes
	Differentials	Yes	Limited	Limited	Maybe*	Limited
Child mortality	National	Yes	No	Yes	Yes [¶]	Yes
	Differentials	Yes	Limited	Limited	Yes [¶]	Limited
Adult mortality	National	Yes	No	Yes	Maybe*±	Weak¶
	Differentials	Yes	Limited	Limited	Perhaps*±	No
Cause of death	All	Yes	Yes [§]	Yes [§]	Maybe [§]	Yes ^{§**}

* With assessment and possible adjustment; methods do not always work.

¶ For a recent period by indirect methods.

± For an intercensal period.

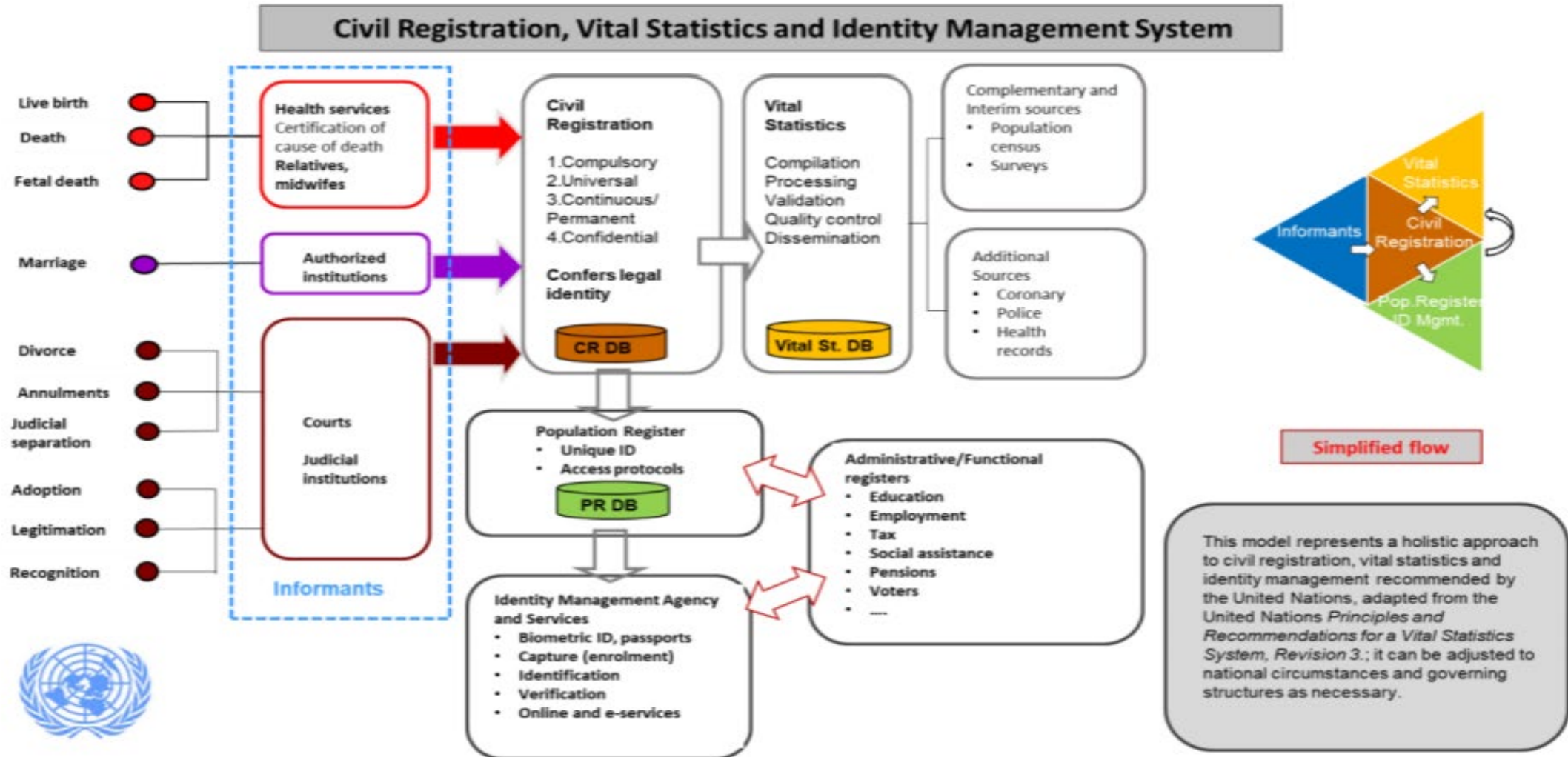
¶ Methods measuring parental survival or sibling history.

§ With verbal autopsy.

** For child deaths identified by a full birth history.

2. Recommended UN LIA model integrating civil registration, vital statistics and identity management

The United Nations recommended holistic approach





Definition of Legal Identity

Legal identity:

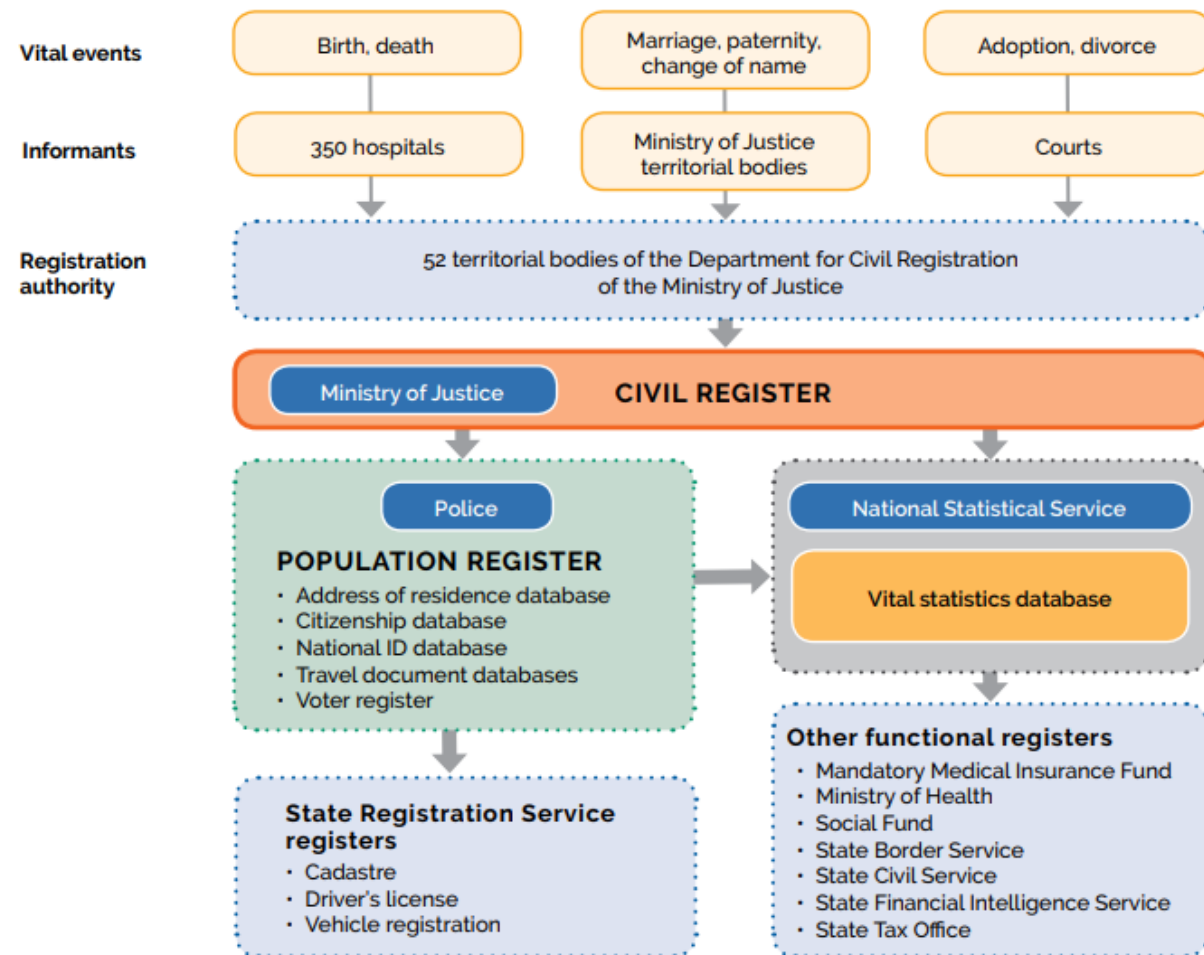
The basic characteristics of an individual's identity, e.g. name, sex, place and date of birth conferred through registration and the issuance of a certificate by an authorized civil registration authority following the occurrence of birth.

Legal identity is retired by the issuance of a death certificate by the civil registration authority upon registration of death.

(Reference: <https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/>)

Country examples 1: Armenia

Source: Compendium of Good Practices in Linking Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and Identity Management Systems [http://www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/CRVS Compendium e WEB 0.pdf](http://www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/CRVS%20Compendium%20e%20WEB%200.pdf)

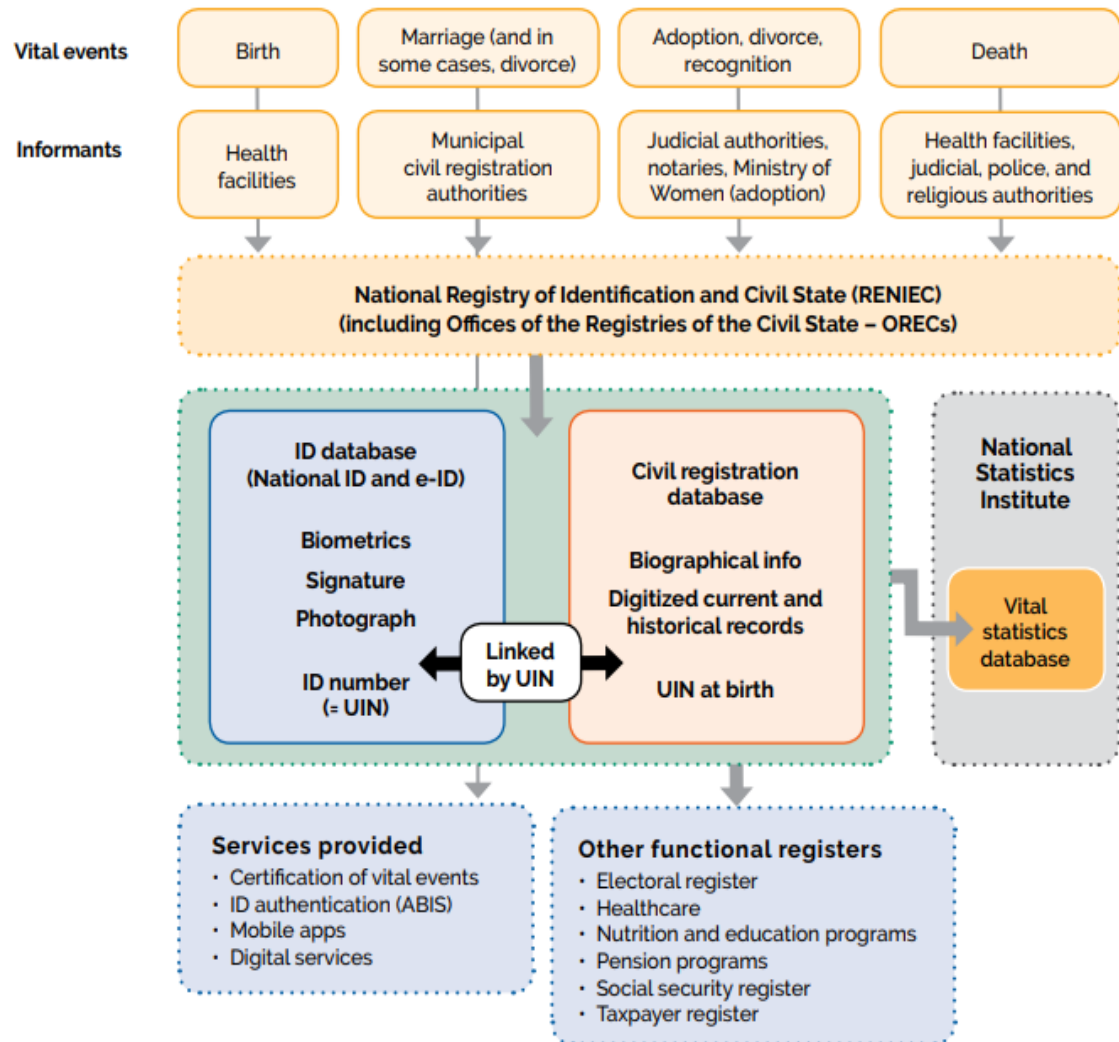


- The civil registration and identity management system are under different agencies but the systems are interoperable
- The civil registration system enables linkage of individual persons records
- The civil registration system is a main source of identity data recognized by the state for identity management and issuance of identification credentials
- The population register is the main tool the Police use to manage identity data and issue national ID cards and travel documents, and granting of citizenship.
- The stock of the population register was built off using the data from the database of issued national identity cards
- Every update of the civil register is automatically sent to the population register.
- The civil register pulls identity credentials of informant's from the population register

Figure 1.1: Armenia's identity system.

Source: Author

Country example 2: Peru



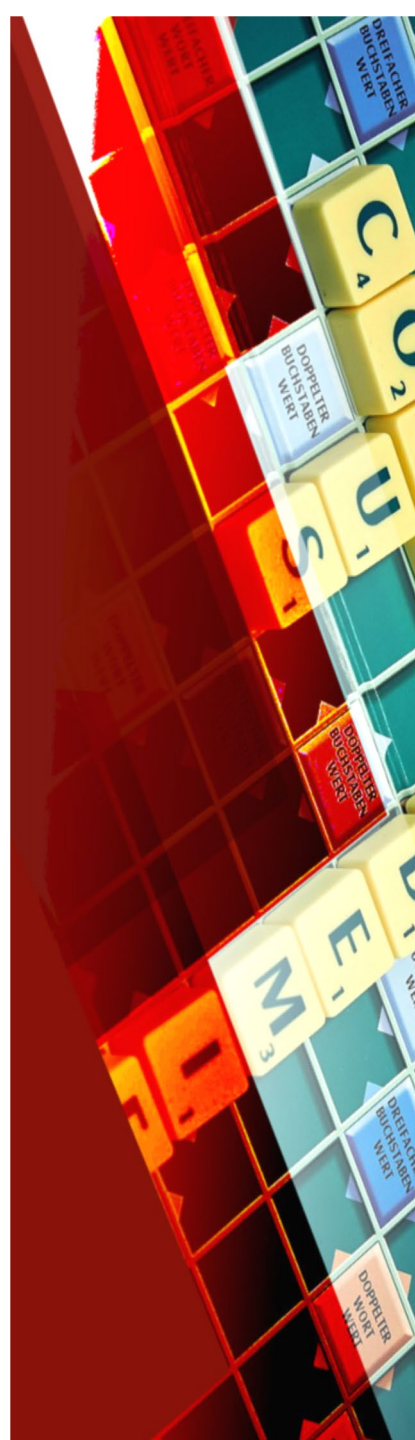
- Single agency in charge of civil registration and national identification system
- Civil registration is maintained as the backbone of ID management,
- A unique identification number (UIN) is assigned with every birth registration
- The national ID card is the only identification credential legally valid for all civil, commercial, administrative, and judicial interactions. All Peruvian nationals must legally have a national ID card at birth
- Civil registration and identification registers are linked through the use of the UIN (assigned at birth), which helps ensure that changes in civil registration are reflected in a citizen's identity.
- All citizens are legally required to inform the civil registration office of any change in their personal information and request rectification. Failure to do so carries a financial penalty equal to \$2.60

Figure 6.1: CRVS and identity management systems in Peru.

3. Reflections on the demands posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and how CRVS systems can respond

COVID-19 and National Statistical Systems

1. COVID 19 has had a critical impact on the political, economic and social well-being of nations and a direct impact on individuals livelihoods including the health, food and social security.
2. The need to **closely monitor** human development is heightened by this crisis and so is the need for robust National Statistical systems (NSS). Specifically, there is a critical heightening of expectations in NSSs to provide data needed to manage:
 - a) Management of the health aspects of the Pandemic;
 - b) Accurate assessment of the economic and social impacts of the pandemic and;
 - c) Development of effective response mechanisms.
3. Concurrently NSSs are severely affected by the Pandemic in multiple ways



Current and future expectations of NSSs including CRVS systems

1. Disaster resilient statistical systems
2. Continuous, timely, accurate and disaggregated small area data
3. Data that enables communication between governments and members of the public (population movements and places of residence)
4. Automated methods of data collection (reduced face-face interactions)
5. Cost-effective methods of statistical production (more data at less cost)



In practice, are CRVS systems playing an **active** role in responding to the current needs of governments?

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The UNLIA Survey

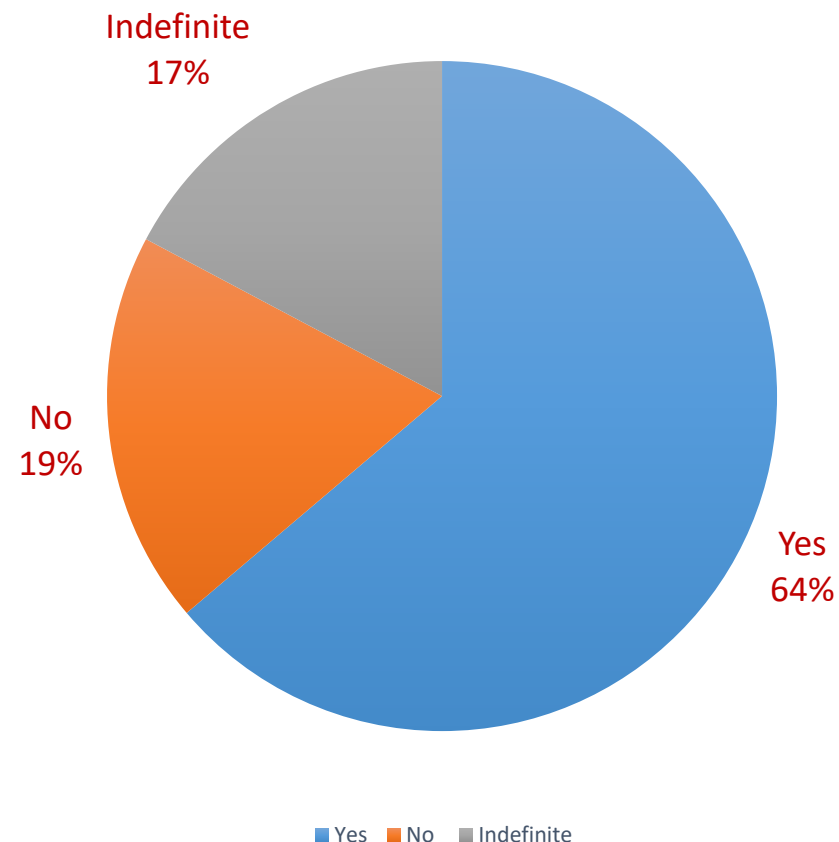
The UN Legal Identity Task Force, launched a global survey to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of civil registration.

(1/4) questions asked:

Is civil registration considered an essential service in your country?

Notes

- 56 Countries and four States of Australia participated in the Survey including. **Regions represented:** Africa(30), North America (1), South America(4), Asia (13) and Oceania (8)
- Yes includes countries for which though essential, civil registration services are limited to some vital events.
- Indefinite: No clear indication whether civil registration is considered an essential service or not



The role of CRVS systems during COVID-19

Are CRVS systems playing an active role in helping governments to address the Pandemic?

- Legal identity remains of crucial importance during public health emergencies; individuals need to prove who they are to access public services.
- A complete CRVS system is the gold standard for measurement of mortality in a population which is crucial during this time.

Are CRVS systems playing an **active** role in responding to the current needs of governments?

No-Why?

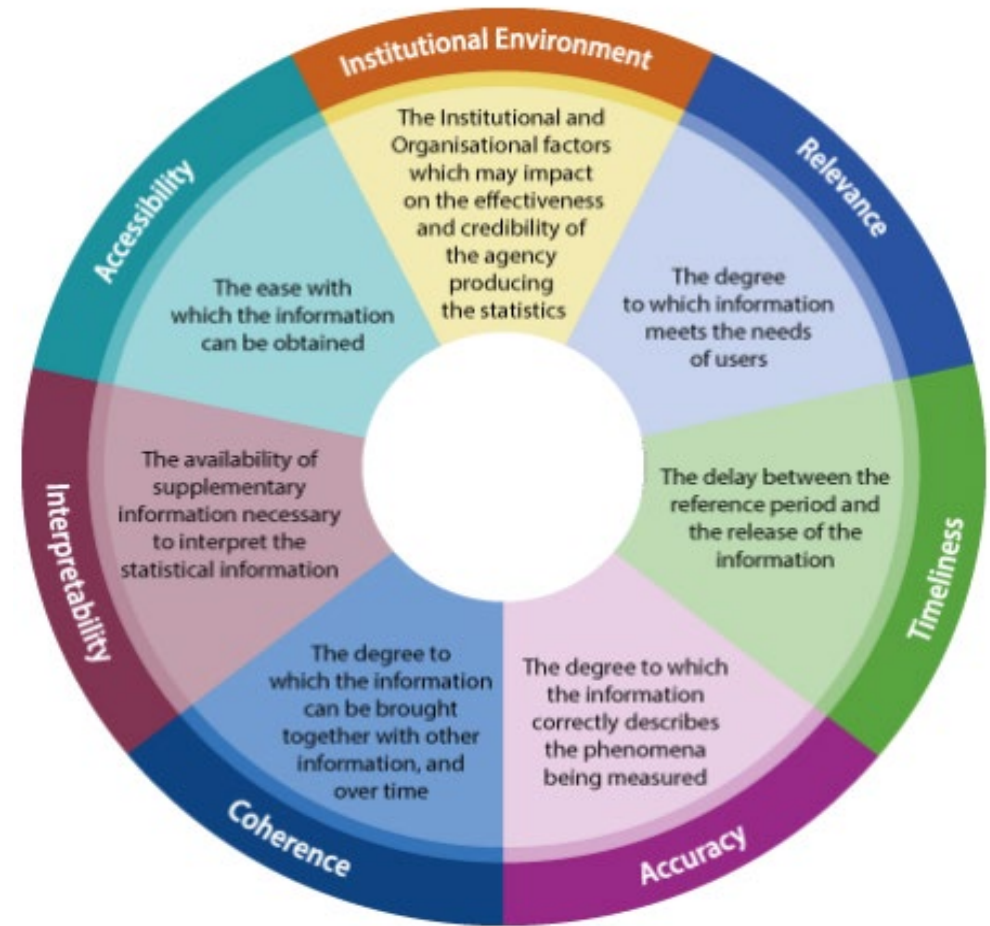
Yes-Why?

Are CRVS systems playing an active role in helping governments to address the Pandemic?

Are CRVS systems playing an **active** role in responding to the current needs of governments?

No-Why?

Yes-Why?



ABS Data Quality Framework, May 2009 (Ref: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/dataquality/references/Australia Part A Understanding and Applying the DQF.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/dataquality/references/Australia%20Part%20A%20Understanding%20and%20Applying%20the%20DQF.pdf))

What is needed to ensure that CRVS systems remain relevant in meeting the demands?

1. We must not only focus on the primary functions of the CRVS system but realisation of their greater goal which is supporting human development as a whole.
2. Optimising CRVS systems requires their linkage with other critical data such as physical, addresses, education, housing, pensions etc.
3. **Population registers** play a critical role in enabling such optimisation and are potentially the most critically needed development for most governments, both during and post COVID-19.



4. An overview of population registers, why they are crucial both now and in future and why CRVS practitioners should care to support their



Definitions –(1)

Population register

“An **individualized** data system, that is, a mechanism of **continuous recording**, and/or of **coordinated linkage**, of selected information pertaining to each member of the **resident population** of a country in such a way to provide the possibility of determining up-to-date information concerning the size and characteristics of that population at selected time intervals”-*Methodology and Evaluation of Population Registers and Similar Systems (United Nations, 1969)*.

..... The method and sources of updating should cover all changes so that the characteristics of individuals in the register remain current.

Rationale and purpose

1. Administrative

- a) Provide precise identification of each individual member of the population which is needed to implement and monitor a wide range of public management and planning policies .
- b) Enable communication with or about a certain individual concerning matters relevant to the government or a private organisation.

2. Statistical (for policy and planning):

- a) Enables estimation of the size of a population and its socio-demographic structure at a point in time, as well as population change. Size and composition of the resident population
- b) Provides the main source of data on migration.

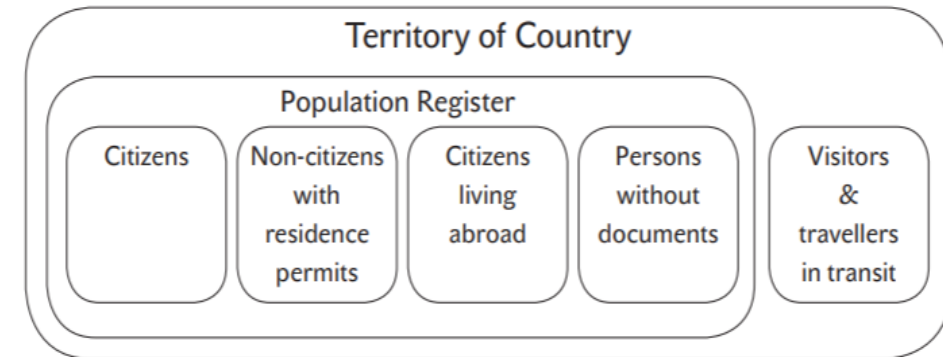
Difference between civil and population register

Civil Register

- Carried primarily for the provision of legal documents and statistical purposes
- Limited to the collection and registration of vital events and legal changes of name

Population registration

- Carried primarily to establish the size of a population in order to help in the planning of state services and to make it possible for the state to contact citizens when required
- Includes some (or all) of the events covered by civil registration, but also includes a wider range of events, such as the establishment of a place of residence and change of address
- The most important information to be recorded concerns life events and place of residence.

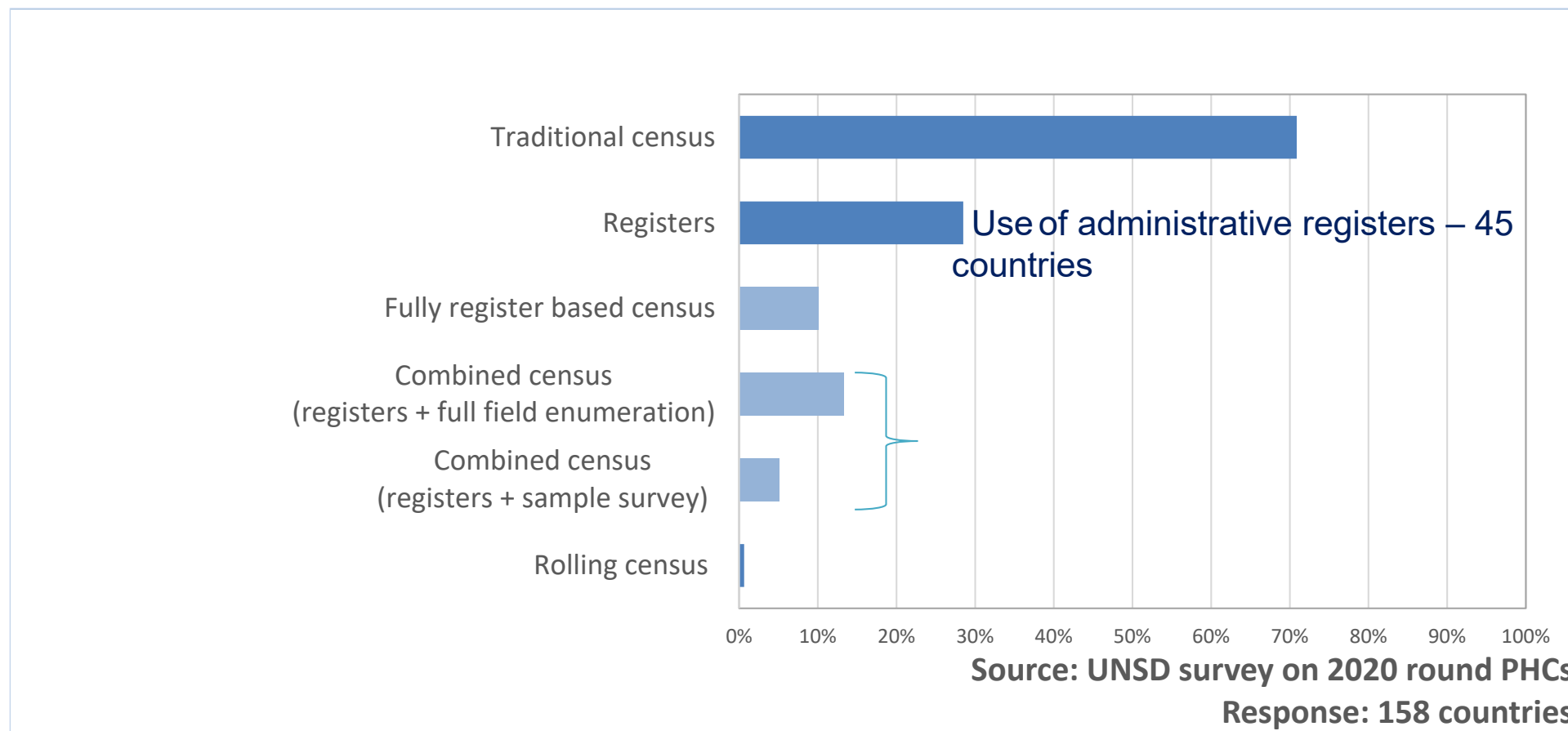


Key benefits of a population register and why CRVS practitioners should care

1. They enable governments to derive robust statistical data about the population on a current and continuous basis. This has important advantages e.g. in cost effectiveness and meeting regular demand for data.
2. By linking individual records to physical address and migration data, population registers are crucial in enabling communication between governments and individual members of the population and the targeting of key interventions.
3. Functioning population registers will inherently lead to appreciation of the value of CRVS systems and therefore increased investments towards development of CRVS systems

Key benefits of a population register and why CRVS practitioners should care

- Global trends show increase in use of registers in census programmes. This trend is likely to increase with the current pandemic



5. UN guidelines for maintaining civil registration during the COVID-19 pandemic

Recommendations for civil registration authorities to ensure operational continuity during COVID-19 and allow for the continued production of comprehensive vital statistics .

These recommendations are issued by the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda Task Force with the support of, and contributions by, UNECA, UNESCAP and SPC. Available at: <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/qb7ys>

Assessing the impact of the pandemic

- ❑ The UN LIA Task Force issued a set of guidelines for maintaining civil registration during the COVID-19 pandemic available at:
<https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/COVID-19/>
- ❑ Developing a guidance note
 - ❑ The note should provide clear and unambiguous guidance for ensuring the availability of civil registration services in times of COVID-19 pandemic
- ❑ Modifying operational arrangements
 - ❑ Expand the list and eligibility of informers, particularly for vital events occurring outside the health system institutions
 - ❑ Establish process/waivers for missing documents
 - ❑ Balancing access to the registration of vital events and the robustness of trustworthiness of vital records and certificates
 - ❑ Suspend fees



Assessing the impact of the pandemic

- ❑ The UN LIA Task Force issued a set of guidelines for maintaining civil registration during the COVID-19 pandemic available at: <https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/COVID-19/>
- ❑ Planning for handling the expected backlog – peaks are to be expected especially for death registration during the pandemic; however, significant backlog in birth and marriage registration also needs to be addressed
- ❑ Online provision of services, where applicable and tested, should be expanded; coping with the COVID-19 pandemic represents also an opportunity to jump start the discussion of introducing and dispatching online services once the pandemic is over
- ❑ Waiving late registration fees
- ❑ Public outreach
- ❑ Protection of staff
- ❑ Interaction with other government institutions – primarily Statistical Office



References

1. Compendium of Good Practices in Linking Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and Identity Management Systems [http://www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/CRVS Compendium e WEB 0.pdf](http://www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/CRVS%20Compendium%20WEB%200.pdf)
2. United Nations Principles and recommendations for a vital statistics system <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/standmeth/principles/M19Rev3en.pdf>
3. United Nations Strategy for Legal Identity for All . <https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/documents/UN-Strategy-for-LIA.pdf>