

LATIN AMERICAN WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIES
FOR ACCELERATING THE IMPROVEMENT OF
VITAL STATISTICS AND CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

Buenos Aires, Argentina
2-6 December 1991

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT
UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL OFFICE

REPORT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIES
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. ORIGIN OF THE WORKSHOP AND PREPARATORY WORK

The United Nations Statistical Commission, at its twenty-sixth session (4-13 February 1991),¹ welcomed and gave its full support to the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems,² prepared jointly by the United Nations Statistical Office, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics. Among other activities proposed in the Programme, the Statistical Commission approved the suggestion that specialized workshops should be conducted in Latin America, Africa and other regions, under its auspices, and urged the United Nations Statistical Office and the other agencies sponsoring the Programme to implement those workshops as soon as possible.

The need for such workshops and activities arose from the recognition that vital statistics and civil-registration systems have remained almost stationary during the past 20 to 30 years, while the use of vital statistics has increased considerably during the same period. Indeed, the present vital-statistics and civil-registration systems of many developing countries are incapable of regularly producing complete and reliable vital statistics. What is more, those systems are hampered by a lack of financing and high-level support, and in a number of countries they are becoming non-operating offices.

Accordingly, the present International Programme is intended to encourage countries to take steps for eliminating the obstacles that impede the development of the systems in question. It is to be hoped that the countries will take specific action for progressively resolving the problems that exist in the systems, as revealed by their own evaluations of the situation. To that end, the International Programme will unify and combine the technical and financial resources of the competent international organizations, bilateral agencies and technical bodies. An attempt will be made to obtain the support, participation and cooperation of a broad range of multilateral and bilateral donor agencies and of the organizations and institutions concerned.

The need to have national vital-statistics and civil-registration systems is universally recognized. Suffice it to say that an important purpose of the systems is to serve as a permanent and continuing source of statistics on births,

¹Statistical Commission, Report of the Twenty-sixth Session (4-13 February 1991). Economic and Social Council, Official Records 1991. Supplement No. 5 (United Nations E/1991/25, E/CN.3/1991/32).

²United Nations, International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems. United Nations Statistical Office, New York, 1989.

deaths, intrauterine deaths, marriages, divorces and the like, in order to monitor the growth and natural variations of the structure, composition and distribution of the population. They also provides certifications of the vital facts registered in order to comply with the country's legal and administrative requirements.

The Statistical Commission noted with satisfaction that the new Programme was oriented towards each country and used a number of new strategies designed to overcome some of the weaknesses of recent international technical-cooperation efforts in this field, with a view to making the activities nationally sustainable. Such strategies include: (a) an in-depth diagnosis of the problems faced by the systems in each country; (b) concentration on the improvement of systems at the national level rather than only in demonstration or pilot areas; (c) the adoption of improvement plans by countries, together with a firm decision to implement them in a sustained manner; (d) concentration during the initial stage on those countries which offer the best opportunities for achieving complete coverage of the registration of vital facts, in the short term (four to five years), so that the lessons learned may be applied in other regions of the world.

During the twenty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission, the Government of the Argentine Republic, represented by the Director of Coordination of Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, [Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC)] offered to host the Latin American Workshop on Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, and the Statistical Commission was glad to accept the offer. In May 1991 the Argentine Government, through the National Director of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, extended an official invitation in which it offered to host the Latin American Workshop on Strategies for the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems. As a result, in October 1991 the United Nations and the Argentine Government signed the cooperation agreement for the holding of the Workshop.

Since March 1991, the Advisory Committee of the International Programme, consisting of representatives of the United Nations Statistical Office (4), the Pan American Health Organization (officially representing the World Health Organization) (2) and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics (2), worked jointly on the planning of the Workshop and gave their support to the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, the executive agency of the Workshop in the context of project INT/90/P.18. The United Nations Population Fund granted the necessary funds for the implementation of the Workshop in 1991. The Workshop was opened at Buenos Aires on 2 December 1991.

2. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Workshop were: (i) to discuss ways and means for promoting the knowledge of vital-statistics and civil-registration systems in the invited countries; (ii) to evaluate the present situation of the systems in each country, including the adaptation of registration procedures and the stages of processing of the statistics obtained; and (iii) to suggest the main components of the national plans of action for the improvement of the systems in the participating countries.

To that end, the Workshop discussed the following:

- (a) Diagnosis of the national vital-statistics and civil-registration systems in each country, including technical facilities, resources and the problems encountered in actions designed to improve the systems;
- (b) The role of the vital-statistics and civil-registrations systems in each country for various uses and application;

- (c) Strategies for solving the problems of the systems in order to promote their development, bearing in mind the availability of modern technology;
- (d) The elements required for a national programme of activities, in the short and medium term, for substantial improvement of the system, with the priority objective of increasing the coverage in the registration of vital facts;
- (e) The forms of technical cooperation between international, regional and non-governmental agencies in support of the national plans of action for improving the systems.

3. SPONSORS

The Government of Argentina and the United Nations were jointly responsible for the organization and conduct of the Workshop. At the operational level, Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses and the United Nations Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (TCD) directly assumed responsibility for the planning, organization and implementation of the Workshop. TCD, in turn, received direct technical support from the United Nations Statistical Office, the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, while the United Nations Population Fund financed the Workshop.

4. PARTICIPATION OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT

Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) appointed a Local Organizing Committee for the Workshop, with representatives of INDEC, of the Ministry of Public Health and of the Civil Registry and Registry of the Capacity of Persons; the membership of the Committee was the following:

Local Organizing Committee for the Workshop:

Technical Secretary: Alejandro Giusti, Chief of the Demographic Analysis Department, INDEC

Members: José Hernando Pirota, General Director of the Civil Registry and Registry of the Capacity of Persons, Province of Chaco
 Elida Hilda Marconi, Director, Directorate of Health Statistics, Ministry of Public Health
 Graciela Dinardi, Researcher, Department of Demographic Analysis, INDEC

For the holding of the Workshop, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses also provided the conference hall, the secretarial and auxiliary personnel in the conference hall, assistance in obtaining hotel reservations, document-reproduction facilities, typewriters, a projector, sound equipment and receivers for simultaneous interpretation, financing for two days of interpretation, office materials and supplies, cafeteria services between meetings of the Workshop and, occasionally, local transport facilities. INDEC assumed responsibility for the reproduction of documents for the Workshop. In all, 30 printed documents were distributed to the participants.

5. PARTICIPATION BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The United Nations designated two representatives to the Workshop from the permanent staff of the Statistical Office, who assumed technical and

administrative responsibility for the organization and conduct of the Workshop. Assisted by Argentina's Local Organizing Committee, they shared responsibilities for the holding of the Workshop at Buenos Aires, they submitted technical documents, and one of them presided over some of the meetings.

The United Nations paid the cost of travel and of the stay at Buenos Aires for 23 official representatives of the 11 Latin American countries invited: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Uruguay, for two representatives of the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics and for the two United Nations representatives. In addition, it financed three days of simultaneous interpretation at the Workshop. The United Nations also provided bibliographical material, office supplies and materials, photocopier facilities and typing services during the entire preparatory stage of the Workshop, between March and December 1991.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), officially representing the World Health Organization, and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics collaborated closely with the United Nations Statistical Office from the start of planning to the conclusion of the Workshop.

6. PARTICIPANTS

The Governments of 11 South American and North American countries in which there is 80 per cent or higher coverage of the registration of births (or deaths) were invited to name two representatives, one from the office responsible for civil registration and the other from the office responsible for vital statistics. Emphasis was placed on the need for carefully selecting the country representatives, who had to have technical knowledge and extensive experience with the systems and who also had to be capable of discussing, and proposing viable solutions for, the many problems interfering with the development of the systems.

The invitations were sent out through the National Directors of the Institutes (Directorates, Offices) of Statistics of the countries concerned, who were requested, in addition to proposing the candidates, to coordinate and prepare the technical documents required for the Workshop. Their collaboration was complete and efficient and undoubtedly contributed directly to the success of the Workshop.

The two official representatives of each country were required to contribute a national report on the present state of the national vital-statistics and civil-registration systems, including the roles of those systems for various purposes. They also had to make an evaluation of the systems in all their phases, with a view to indicating precisely what the problems were. At the same time, they were to propose the strategies that had to be developed for overcoming the obstacles found in the diagnosis, including the estimated times required for their implementation, so that the systems could efficiently achieve the purposes for which they were designed.

The countries to which invitations were sent were: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Uruguay. Those countries, in accordance with the general lines of the International Programme, have a high potential for promoting the development of their vital-statistics and civil-registration systems. Furthermore, all of them were Spanish-speaking countries except for Brazil, which is Portuguese-speaking. Invitations were also sent to two developed countries, Denmark and Norway, whose vital-statistics and civil-registration systems have long maintained a high level of efficiency. In addition, invitations to participate were sent to the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, the United

Nations Population Fund, the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Joint Population Unit of the Latin American Centre for Demography and CEPAL-Buenos Aires, the Inter-American Statistical Training Centre [Centro Interamericano de Enseñanza de Estadística (CIENES, Chile)], the Inter-American Conference of Statistics (CIE, Panama) and the Inter-American Children's Institute (Uruguay).

Some countries showed great interest in the Workshop and appointed observers in addition to the official representatives. The official representatives appointed to the Workshop included National Directors of Statistics, Directors of Demographic and Social Statistics or National Directors of Civil Registries (or their representatives, in the case of those countries which have no national office of civil registration). The detailed listing of participants in the Workshop is given in annex 1 to this report.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF THE WORKSHOP

(a) Site of the Workshop

The opening and closing ceremonies and the plenary meetings of the Workshop were held in the spacious and well-equipped Bosch Conference Hall of the Central Reserve Bank of Argentina, in the city of Buenos Aires, from 2 to 6 December 1991 inclusive. In addition, Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses made three of its meeting rooms available for meetings of Working Groups.

(b) Time-table and programme of work

Two working meetings were held every day, one in the morning and another in the afternoon, during the period from Monday, 2 December to Friday, 6 December 1991. Three of the meetings began at 8:30 a.m. and two at 9 a.m., and the meetings lasted until 6 and 7 p.m., with 15 minutes of coffee breaks in the morning and in the afternoon and an hour and a half for lunch.

The first hour and a half of the morning meeting on Monday, 2 December was devoted to registering the participants and to issuing the documentation and the travel allowances (to the foreign participants). The opening ceremony followed the registration of participants. The detailed programme of work is given in annex 2, and a list of the documents presented at the Workshop is contained in annex 3.

(c) Language

At the time when the official invitations were sent out to national Governments, it was announced that the official language of the Workshop would be Spanish. Nevertheless, out of consideration for the representatives of Denmark, Norway and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, arrangements were made for simultaneous interpretation into English. The costs of the interpretation were shared between the United Nations and Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKSHOP

1. OPENING CEREMONY

The formal opening of the Workshop took place on Monday, 2 December 1991, presided over by Mr. Y. C. Yu of the United Nations. The participants included the official representatives of the countries, official observers, other

observers and special guests.

The Workshop was opened by the Director of INDEC, who recommended placing greater emphasis on the implementation of practical methodologies for the improvement of vital-statistics and civil-registration systems during the week of work.

Mr. Yu pointed out the importance of the Workshop in the context of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital-statistics and Civil-registration Systems, sponsored by a number of international agencies.

Argentina's Director of Health Statistics, on behalf of the participants, stressed the importance of seeking new strategies in the improvement of vital statistics. She also stated that vital statistics were essential to the new concept of health and illness and to the risk-based programming of health activities.

Thereafter an Argentine, the General Director of the Civil Registry and Registry of Capacity of Persons of the Province of Chaco, was elected Chairman of the Workshop, and another Argentine, the Director of Health Statistics, was elected Rapporteur.

2. FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Present situation of national vital-statistics and civil-registration systems

Mrs. Violeta Gonzales Díaz of the United Nations Statistical Office presented the document entitled "International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems". She stated that the Workshop marked the opening of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital-statistics and Civil Registration Systems. That Programme is sponsored jointly by the United Nations Statistical Office, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics. She said that the Programme had received the full support of the United Nations Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session, held at New York from 4 to 13 February 1991, and that the Commission had asked the United Nations Statistical Office to implement it.

She added that the principal objective of the Programme was to encourage developing countries to design and carry out national programmes of progressive reform, nation-wide in scope, in their vital-statistics and civil-registration systems, including the appropriate legal frameworks. She emphasized that the reforms should be based on an exhaustive evaluation of the systems, in order to determine accurately the problems that should be given priority attention, bearing in mind the human, financial and other resources available in the countries, as well as the existing political climate. Furthermore, such reform programmes should be given economic support by the countries' own Governments, owing to the permanent and continuing nature of the systems in question. In order to ensure that the reforms yielded positive results, the national programme should inter alia take account of the needs of both the users and the producers of civil registration and vital statistics. That could be achieved through the formation of a National Committee of representatives of the agencies responsible for vital statistics and civil registration and the agencies that were the largest users of those systems.

For that purpose of moving forward in the development of such systems, the International Programme will mobilize all available resources at the international level, both technical and financial, in order to help countries in their efforts along that line. She said that the focus of this programme is

situated in the United Nations Statistical Office and in the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, where an information centre concerned with this material will also operate in order to serve the countries participating in the Programme. She outlined the immediate and long-term objectives of the Programme and the activities provided for in the programme of work for the next four years.

She stated that during the 1970s there had been another international programme supported by the United Nations for helping countries to collect their vital statistics and organize their civil registries. Since that time a great deal of progress had been made in that field in terms of methodology and concepts, data presentation and the like, but a great deal remains to be done with regard to the problems of coverage, quality and timeliness. In that respect, she said, the situation had not changed very much between 1950 and 1991. Only a few developing countries had been capable of entering the category of those with efficient vital-statistics and civil-registration systems in that period of over 40 years.

She observed that it is impossible to have development without good administration and that there cannot be good administration without good civil registration and vital statistics, since these constitute a foundation for human rights and for population growth. Moreover, vital statistics provide a fundamental guideline for appropriate planning and for development at the local level.

Since 1987 the United Nations, together with the Population Fund, the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, WHO and PAHO, have been collecting ideas on what countries could do with their vital-statistics and civil-registration systems, culminating in the design of a new international programme that will replace the programme of the 1970s. The new programme also tends to eliminate duplication of work on the part of different international and regional organizations at the country level.

She emphasized that countries must not only carry out their own projects but also seek financing for them within their own Governments and, if necessary, in international cooperation. She invited countries to join the International Programme and to begin implementing their reforms in the near future.

Thereafter she presented the documents entitled "Outline for preparing a country report on the current status of vital statistics and civil registration systems" and "Review and assessment of national civil registration and vital statistics systems". At the conclusion of her presentation, participants made their comments.

The Workshop then began the discussion of the situation of vital-statistics and civil-registration systems in each of the invited countries, in order to ascertain the problems and define preliminary lines of strategy for accelerating the improvement of those systems, on the basis of the presentation of the following reports:

1. Informe nacional sobre el estado actual del registro civil y el sistema de estadísticas vitales en Argentina [National report on the current status of civil registration and the system of vital statistics in Argentina]
by: José Pirota, Elida Marconi et al.
2. Informe nacional sobre el estado actual del registro civil y el sistema de estadísticas vitales de Brasil [National report on the current status of civil registration and the system of vital statistics of Brazil]
by: Fabio Ribeiro de Abreu and Medeiros Frias de Luiz Armando

3. Informe nacional sobre el estado actual del registro civil y el sistema de estadísticas vitales de México [National report on the current status of the civil registry and the system of vital statistics of Mexico]
by: Arturo Ortiz Navarro and María de los Angeles Valdez
4. Informe nacional sobre el estado actual de los sistemas de registro civil y estadísticas vitales de Venezuela [National report on the current status of the systems of civil registration and vital statistics in Venezuela]
by: José Cabrera Lista y Rahiza Carvallo
5. Situación actual de los sistemas nacionales de registro civil y estadísticas vitales de Colombia [Present situation of the national systems of civil registration and vital statistics of Colombia]
by: Francisco Zuluaga Gil and Claudia Muñoz Calderón
6. La situación actual de los sistemas de registro civil y estadísticas vitales en Chile [The present status of the systems of civil registration and vital statistics in Chile] by: Berta Belmar Ruiz and Margarita Pérez Alvarez
7. Estado actual del sistema de registro civil y estadísticas vitales en Ecuador [Present status of the system of civil registration and vital statistics in Ecuador]
by: Guillermo Estrella Burbano and Alicia Alvarez Armas
8. Situación actual del sistema de registro civil y estadísticas vitales de Uruguay [Present situation of the system of civil registration and vital statistics of Uruguay]
by: Juan José Laborde Vidal, Mabel Abella de Mutarelli and Nelly Niedworok
9. Situación actual de los sistemas nacionales de registro civil y estadísticas vitales en Costa Rica [Present situation of the national systems of civil registration and vital statistics of Costa Rica]
by: Rodolfo Ledezma Pacheco, Virginia Rodríguez Vargas and María Marta Báez Barahona
10. Situación actual de los sistemas nacionales de registro civil y estadísticas vitales en Guatemala [Present situation of the national systems of civil registration and vital statistics of Guatemala]
by: Gerardo Prado and Neftalí Hernández
11. Situación actual de los sistemas nacionales de registro civil y estadísticas vitales de Panamá [Present situation of the national systems of civil registration and vital statistics of Panama]
by: Estelina A. Smith de Castillo and Ceila Peñalba Ordóñez.

At the conclusion of the presentations, the reports presented were discussed and the most relevant problems were identified.

The technical, administrative and legal aspects of the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems were presented and discussed. The various functions performed in the countries by those systems were also indicated, and the problems in each of those spheres were identified. In addition to the common problems of the still incomplete coverage of registration (2 to 10 per cent of births omitted, 5 to 20 per cent of deaths omitted), deficient quality and lack of timeliness in the statistics, there were also difficulties of a juridical, technical and administrative nature, budgetary restrictions, shortage of trained

human resources, insufficient technological resources, socio-economic factors of the population and the like. Among other things, the speakers also pointed out the urgent need to devote more attention to the civil-registration and vital-statistics personnel in terms of their time on the job, their remuneration and their training. There was a consensus that those systems required substantial improvements in order to deal with the limitations outlined.

One great common denominator mentioned repeatedly in explanation of the difficulties experienced by the systems was the existence of enormous economic limitations which confront the public institutions in the participating countries and which naturally affect the efficiency of the systems. It was recognized that the problems are largely institutional and political in nature. At the same time, it was observed that there are frequently repeated postponements in the implementation of improvement projects and a lack of commitment on the part of the Governments to the activities in question, with the result that the work is discontinued and the projects collapse.

For that reason, it was considered essential to find a political agency to put into practice the solutions suggested at the Workshop, with a view to promoting the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems. For example, amendments to legislation in this field depend on the political will to bring about the desired modifications in the systems. Accordingly, it was important to find such a political agency, and to that end, the National Director of Civil Registration and, in those countries in which there is no central registration office, the National Directors of Statistics were indicated as the key entities in the strategy for promoting and providing leadership in such changes.

In general terms, countries with a federal organization, such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, pose the most serious challenges to breaking out of the stagnation of the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems. However, Argentina has made national efforts since 1968, and Mexico during the 1980s, to deal inter alia with the lack of uniformity in the registration procedures and in the processing of vital statistics. Argentina was one of the countries that emphasized the serious problem of failure to document the population, which had resulted from the failure to register births in the civil registry and was regarded by Argentina as a grave social ill.

Of all the countries, Brazil is perhaps the one that has the greatest difficulties in rapidly invigorating and modernizing its systems. A number of different problems were identified. One of these is the fact that the "Cartórios" (7,700), which are the local civil-registration units, are in private hands, under the responsibility of notaries. Added to this is the enormous extent of Brazil's territory and the large size of its population, with many people scattered in rural areas. Moreover, Brazil has no unit endowed with normative and coordinating powers in building up civil registration at the national level. In general terms, civil registration in Brazil is characterized by the presence of some areas with complete registration coverage (large cities and urban areas in general) and other areas with very low registration coverage. Enormous importance was attached to the campaigns to make the population with lower educational levels aware of the individual and social importance of civil registration, as a component of the national strategy for improvement. In general, the vital-statistics system in Brazil is highly sophisticated, under the supervision of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, but it suffers from the effects of the still incomplete registration coverage, which is beyond its control.

On the other hand, Chile described experiences with the introduction of modern technology into the administration and management of civil registration in its National Directorate of Civil Registration and Identification; these aroused a great deal of interest among the participants. The Directorate is also responsible for identification of the population. This function is credited with

the fact that civil registration has, within relatively short periods, made notable technical advances which have brought such advantages as a high degree of coverage, security of the registry and efficient service to the population. Particularly noteworthy is the close cooperation and coordination that exist between the National Directorate of Civil Registration and Identification, the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Public Health, within the framework of a legal agreement. That joint effort enables the country to make maximum use of the resources already available, in such a way as to provide timely and highly reliable vital statistics. It is the civil registry that provides the files, recorded in magnetic form, for the purposes of preparing vital statistics, thereby avoiding inter alia the duplication of data entries.

Costa Rica has the most advanced civil-registration system in terms of security and coverage (very close to 100 per cent, both for births and for deaths). The high level of registration coverage is explained by the efficient participation and collaboration of the health sector, whose network of offices acts as a system of auxiliary registration offices throughout the country (births, deaths and fetal deaths). The security of the registry comes from the method of registration now in use. The official registry is established only when the Directorate of Civil Registration, in the capital of the country, has received the certificates from its peripheral auxiliary registration offices; those certificates are entered every day into special books and, parallel with this, into magnetic data-storage units. The Central Registration Office, under the general administration of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, has highly sophisticated computer facilities, so that it can automatically certify the data registered, make the necessary checks to detect possible duplicate registrations, keep the registration files in order, generate the identity documents for the population and prepare the electoral lists with a high degree of accuracy and timeliness. The timeliness is made possible by the fact that the registers are brought up to date every day, when the civil-registration death reports are available.

Panama exhibits a pattern similar to that of Costa Rica. It is also very close to having complete coverage in its birth registers, it has a Central Office of Civil Registration, under the administration of the Elections Tribunal, and it combines the responsibility of identification of the population and preparation of the electoral lists.

Uruguay, for its part, has only minor problems with coverage in births and deaths but is troubled by administrative, operational and legal problems, both in the civil-registration system and in the vital-statistics system. It should be mentioned that, among all the countries, Uruguay has the highest degree of sophistication in collecting data on the causes of death, thanks to the fact that those causes are certified by physicians. In the case of incorrect, deficient or incomplete certifications the physicians are notified by the Ministry of Health, and this method has helped to bring considerable improvement in the quality of data collection on causes of death.

Colombia, which more than 20 years ago established its National Registration Office, with legal power to establish, control and supervise civil registration, still is suffering from a lack of continuous attention and a constant lack of governmental support, while at the same time it is confronted by problems of insufficient coverage and timeliness of the registration. This is a clear example of the fact that a central office for managing civil registration is important but not sufficient.

Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala and Venezuela have no such central entity with normative and supervisory powers.

In the participating countries the general tendency in the reorganization of civil-registration systems with a view to improving their efficiency has been

to add to them other services and collateral functions to which the national Governments generally attach greater importance. These include, for instance, the identification of persons and/or the preparation of electoral lists. Examples of this type of technical and administrative arrangement were given by the systems of Costa Rica, Colombia, Chile, Panama and Ecuador.

In the field of vital statistics the trend is towards closer collaboration between the agencies involved, in order to avoid overlapping and duplication of work and the unnecessary waste of scarce State resources. There is also a clearly perceived tendency towards decentralization of processing, at least with regard to data entry, through the computer facilities of regional (or provincial or state) statistical offices. Argentina, Mexico and Ecuador provide successful and concrete examples along this line.

3. SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Main uses of civil-registration documents (certificates) and of vital statistics

At this meeting the following documents were presented:

1. Various sources of data and methods of vital statistics
by: United Nations Statistical Office
2. Uses of civil-registry documents and vital statistics in development programmes
by: International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics
3. La importancia de las estadísticas de nacimientos y defunciones para los programas y servicios de salud [The importance of birth and death statistics for health programmes and services]
by: Pan American Health Organization
4. Hacia una evaluación sistemática y mejoramiento permanente de la calidad de las estadísticas sobre hechos vitales [Towards a systematic evaluation and permanent improvement of the quality of statistics on vital facts]
by: Ricardo Alvarado
5. Principales usos de las actas de registro civil y su importancia: el caso de Costa Rica [Principal uses of civil-registration documents and their importance: the case of Costa Rica]
by: Rodolfo Ledezma Pacheco
6. Usos de las actas de registro civil para servicios de identificación: el caso de Chile [Uses of civil-registration documents for identification services: the case of Chile]
by: Berta Belmar Ruiz
7. Rol de las actas del registro civil en la protección de los derechos del niño, de la familia y de los individuos [Role of civil-registration documents in the protection of the rights of the child, of the family and of individuals]
by: Carlos Amado

After the presentations the participants made their observations and comments.

4. THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Modern technology for the storage and retrieval of civil-registration documents and for the processing of vital statistics

The following documents were presented at this meeting:

- (a) Tecnología moderna para el almacenamiento y recuperación de archivos de registro civil y procesamiento de estadísticas vitales [Modern technology for the storage and retrieval of civil-registration files and the processing of vital statistics]
by: Vito Logrillo
- (b) Base de datos para registro civil y estadísticas vitales: el caso de Chile [Database for civil registration and vital statistics: the case of Chile]
by: Berta Belmar
- (c) De un sistema centralizado hacia un sistema descentralizado: la experiencia de México [From a centralized system towards a decentralized system: the experience of Mexico]
by: María de los Angeles Valdez
- (d) Experiences with computerization of civil registration
by: Jane Bloch
- (e) Computer-based vital statistics. Issues to consider. Some Danish experiences
by: Anita Lange
- (f) Role and status of civil registration (population registration) and vital statistics systems - The case of Norway
by: Halvard Skiri

The presentations were followed by discussions of the documents presented.

5. FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

The potential role of international, regional and bilateral agencies in supporting the efforts and needs of countries in implementing the International Programme

The following aspects were discussed at this meeting:

- (a) The role of the sponsoring agencies of the International Programme
by: United Nations Statistical Office, Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics
- (b) Perspectivas y desafíos de la cooperación internacional en el mejoramiento de las estadísticas vitales [Prospects and challenges for international cooperation in the improvement of vital statistics]
by: Guillermo Macció

The presentations were followed by comments from the participants.

6. WORKING GROUPS

Three Working Groups, consisting of official representatives of the

countries, were formed. The criterion for forming the groups was the type of administration existing in the civil-registration systems, whether it was administration at the level of federal states or provinces or centralized administration at the level of the capital of the country. Different types of political and administrative organization in the various countries create very different problems for civil-registration systems. The organizers of the Workshop provided the Working Groups with guidelines on the topics under discussion. Each Group held two working meetings. The first meeting was designed to go more deeply into the discussion on:

- The present situation of national vital-statistics and civil-registration systems

The second meeting was designed for the preparation of:

- Conclusions, strategies and recommendations for the improvement of the systems.

Group 1: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela (federal organization)

Group 2: Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay (unitary political and administrative organization)

Group 3: Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama (unitary political and administrative organization)

- (a) Strategies proposed by the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela

At the national level:

1. Going more deeply into the diagnoses on the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems of each country.
2. Developing a process of mass consciousness-raising with the aim of emphasizing the importance of the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems as a permanent and necessary source of socio-demographic information; also, implementing a plan for the dissemination of information from civil registers and their various uses, with emphasis on the benefits, both individual and social, and their importance for the planning of economic development.
3. Making sure that all governmental sectors involved in the system become incorporated into the movement to obtain and to make maximum use of economic and technical resources that would make it possible to develop a national programme for the improvement of vital statistics and civil registration.
4. Making arrangements for large-scale technical assistance, through the training and instruction of civil servants to manage and carry out the programmes that need to be implemented, which would make for efficient consolidation.
5. Promoting legal reforms that would give juridical order to vital statistics and civil registration, in those countries in which this is required.
6. Creating a national civil-registration office for the administrative and technical coordination of subnational systems in those countries which have no such office.

7. Promoting the creation of a national coordinating committee whose members would include all the offices involved in the various stages constituting the generation of vital statistics.
8. Orienting the functioning of civil registration towards an integrated service, incorporating other programmes in it, such as the issuing of identification documents and the preparation of electoral registers and registers of arrivals and departures. The incorporation of such programmes would give individuals, the family and the entire community a measure of organization and efficiency in the fulfilment of social obligations. It would also constitute a source of economic resources for civil registration.

At the international level:

1. Preparing, through the competent international organizations, an outline of the "typical legal norms" which can be included in the legal reforms to be established in each country.
 2. Establishing a centre for the distribution of documentation and information, set up by the United Nations Statistical Office, to be furnished to the various countries, essentially to those participating in the Programme for the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems.
 3. Joint preparation of a sufficiently analytical document by the United Nations Statistical Office and the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, for the purpose of bringing about international agreements and declarations that will encourage our countries to set up programmes for the improvement of vital statistics.
- (b) Strategies proposed by the representatives of Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay:

At the national level:

1. Expansion of the civil-registration networks.
2. Use of other supplementary registration networks, such as health and education networks.
3. Establishment of appropriate office hours for registration offices.
4. Providing citizens with information concerning the necessity, requirements and usefulness of civil registration, through various media, with due regard for the socio-cultural characteristics of the population (languages, dialects, illiteracy, etc.).
5. Taking action to meet the need for certificates concerning vital facts for the performance of certain civil, civic, juridical and religious acts (burials, baptisms, religious weddings, social benefits, etc.).
6. Recommending flexibility in the application of norms for facilitating the recording of vital facts.
7. Avoiding duplicate registration of a single item of vital data by means of:
 - (i) The incorporation into civil registers of suitable modern

technological computing facilities which will promote efficiency, speed and security in vital-statistics and civil-registration systems;

(ii) The obligation to provide the registered person (or his representative) with a sufficiently durable identification document.

At the international level:

1. Promoting the creation and operation of a coordination and cooperation agency which will implement and operate civil-registration, vital-statistics and health programmes, and of other concerned institutions, which should be set out in an agreement or other juridical instrument.
 2. Putting the suggestions of the International Programme into practice in each country and securing the support of national authorities, a fundamental requirement for which is a commitment to the continuity of the national reform programme, even after the termination of international aid, if any. In order to achieve such continuity, it is necessary to sponsor effective communication and interchange between the organizations of different countries and between these and international organizations.
 3. Creating a centre for the distribution of documentation, so that all the persons involved in the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems may have access to the information. The international organizations responsible for dissemination should make sure that the materials can be consulted by the persons concerned.
 4. Promoting the systematization and organization of the normative framework existing in each country with regard to vital-statistics and civil-registration systems, with the objective of making it uniform and up to date, adapting it to social needs and to technical advances and establishing an international commission in order to promote the unification of opinions regarding civil-registration legislation.
 5. Developing strategies aimed at making people aware of the need to put the national programme of reform into practice in civil registration, as an irreplaceable means for preserving the democratic system, as well as to strengthen the personal-identification system and the security of that system.
 6. Promoting the recording and registration of persons with a view to safeguarding the human right enshrined in article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- (c) Strategies proposed by the representatives of Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama:

At the national level:

1. Presenting to the higher governmental authorities a diagnosis, which will be sincere, realistic and as complete as possible, of the present situation of vital-statistics and civil-registration systems, pointing out the disadvantages which that situation represents for governmental planning and governmental development programmes. The report would describe the experiences of the countries which have organized their systems efficiently and in

which it has been demonstrated that those systems have brought positive results, not only with regard to the functioning of civil registration in itself but also as a source for other uses.

2. Suggesting appropriate review and reform of current legislation which will take account of the organization and functioning of the system, in such a way as to make it flexible, timely and simple, giving priority to the maximum possible facilitation of the recording of vital data in the civil register.
3. Placing the civil registry, when the legislation has been revised, in a position that will meet the concern for providing juridical, electoral and statistical accuracy.
4. Providing civil registries and institutions responsible for vital statistics with human and technical resources, which can be achieved by:
 - (i) Instituting training courses for all those civil servants who take part in the collecting, processing and analysis of information (civil registrars, auxiliary registrars, medical and paramedical personnel taking part in the processes of certification, codifiers of causes of death, codifiers of statistical reports, programmers, etc.);
 - (ii) Giving greater operational capacity and more equipment to computing departments, with a view to facilitating the entire registration process and providing users with efficient service;
 - (iii) Putting into operation the plan of microfilming data in order to increase the security of files and consequently reducing their volume;
 - (iv) Making an effort to ensure that the civil registry functions in a single building equipped with all the facilities and security required by the nature of its activities;
 - (v) Simplifying the work of civil registrars and auxiliary registrars, designing a single printed form which will be usable for legal and statistical purposes, which should be delivered to the civil registry through a single channel; the civil registry should deliver the copy to the office responsible for preparing vital statistics;
 - (vi) Establishing proper coordination between the Supreme Court of Justice, the General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses and the Civil Registry in order to establish the system of divorce statistics;
 - (vii) Reviewing the design of printed forms for registering births and deaths, so as to avoid the omission of answers in some sections with regard to births and the handling of more than one printed form in the case of deaths;
 - (viii) Establishing an educational campaign, through the country's educational system, to make the population more aware of the importance of vital statistics, in particular making it clear which ones require their cooperation;
 - (ix) Modernizing the provision of information, a suggested method for which is the application of the package of programmes called

"Data retrieval for small areas by microcomputer" [Recuperación de datos para áreas pequeñas por microcomputador (REDATAM)], developed by the Latin American Centre for Demography, which can make it possible to generate vital statistics, etc., for small geographical units at high speed and with great facility for the users.

At the intra-institutional and inter-institutional levels:

1. Identifying with precision the direct and indirect usefulness to be derived from improving the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems for each of the social sectors and institutions which have decision-making power in the proposed process of change (health, education, political parties, identification services, universities).
2. Making the population aware of the usefulness and importance of improving civil registration. This process should be accompanied by a fully detailed plan of work, with the associated budget.
3. Putting into practice dissemination processes (seminars, for example) for the actions proposed in the preceding paragraph.
4. Introducing into the computer (by magnetic means) all the data of the various certificates or documents containing vital statistics, so as to maintain a systematized information base for future consultations and the issuance of certificates and other documents. This should also make possible the printing of the volumes which will constitute the registration books. It will facilitate the delivery of identity documents by eliminating a series of manual steps, in addition to facilitating strict control of their issuance. The General Directorates of Statistics and the Ministries of Health will conduct the necessary studies and make necessary adjustments to have the database furnished by the Civil Registry, in magnetic form.
5. Promoting the creation or reactivation of national committees for civil registration, vital statistics and health statistics, also involving responsible authorities concerned with economic, political and social decision-making, so that through such a committee it will be possible to set up cooperation agreements both between national organizations and between international organizations, thereby rationalizing the allocation and use of resources. The operation and tasks of such a committee should be defined by a law or decree.
6. Promoting the strengthening of coordination between civil registration and vital statistics, with the organization which prepares electoral patterns. Those channels of coordination and cooperation should be established in the appropriate electoral legislation and vital-statistics legislation.
7. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES OF THE WORKSHOP FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF VITAL-STATISTICS AND CIVIL-REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

Starting from the diagnosis of the objective of improving the quality of data in the context of a production which will supply reliable and timely indicators for the establishment of actions in the improvement of the population's quality of life; and

Considering that the process of data production requires a flexible flow which involves different agencies, the participants in the Workshop propose the following:

1. Making vital statistics more important in relation to other social tasks and giving them the same importance as is accorded to the population-census programme, within the context of a coordinated national statistics system.
2. Establishing and/or raising to a prominent position in each country the National Committee for Vital Statistics and Civil Registration, as a coordinating instrument for the agencies that make up the vital-statistics and civil-registration systems, with a view to making better use of available resources and avoiding duplication of work. The call for the formation of the Committee should be made in each country by the agency responsible for such action under the legislation in force. The creation of a National Committee for Vital Statistics and Civil Registration should be based on a clear juridical framework, with specific clauses which will define the actions to be carried out by each of the components of the Committee in a context of collaboration.
3. Optimizing the use of resources among the component organizations of the vital-statistics system, considering that the allocation of resources among those organizations has historically been unequal and that the solution failed to resolve the problems of each unit taken separately.
4. Creating, through a constituent act, at the conclusion of the Workshop, the Latin American Committee of Directors or Civil Servants Organically Representing the Civil-Registration System. That Committee should extend not only to the countries attending but also to the other Latin American countries. In those countries in which there is no national civil-registration service, the Committee should include a representative of a similar organization.
5. To review the legal frameworks of vital statistics and civil registration, making any required changes, in those countries in which it is considered necessary, after an evaluation, in order to make the registration system as easy to use as possible and to make the statistics more timely.
6. Developing in the countries concerned a plan of reform whose main objective will be to improve the integrity and quality of the data as part of the improvement of the people's quality of life.
7. Developing strategies aimed at making people aware of the need to put the national reform programme into practice, as an irreplaceable means for the preservation of a democratic system, strengthening the systems of personal identification and civil registration.
8. Making the political authorities aware of the importance of vital statistics and civil registration, on the basis of the presentation of the improved diagnosis prepared for the drafting of the Workshop document, incorporating therein the experiences of the countries which have made important advances in this sphere.
9. Emphasizing the close association between the development and quality of vital statistics and those of health services and programmes.
10. Promoting a process of making people aware of the uses of the data of the vital-statistics system.
11. Making the disadvantaged sectors of the population aware of the

social and civic importance of civil registration.

12. Modernizing civil registration and the vital-statistics offices through a reorganization based on data-processing technology.
13. Introducing, as a course of positive action, the microfilming of data to ensure greater security and to reduce the size of the files.
14. Revising the printed forms for civil registration and vital statistics, instruction sheets and procedural guides, in order to improve the quality of data and to meet the new requirements of the main users.
15. Simplifying the workload of the registrars, with redesigning of the registration forms and vital-statistics forms so as to facilitate the work.
16. Encouraging and promoting the registration of vital data, with due regard for the fact that the problem of under-registration is the result of socio-economic, cultural and geographical differences which cannot be overcome solely by improving the operational capacity of civil registration.
17. Extending the civil-registration network on the basis of the networks of the health service and the education or other services which are considered relevant according to the various characteristics of the countries, as a valid strategy for improving registration coverage.
18. Stimulating the creation of a National Service or National Institute for Civil Registration in those countries in which no such institution exists and making it viable in accordance with the country's organization, its juridical framework and the existing political will.
19. Developing the intensive training of personnel in all offices involved in the process which produces vital statistics and civil-registration data.
20. Establishing and/or strengthening the systems of remarks or observations (criticism) as one of the most effective methods for improving the quality of the medical certification of causes of death.
21. Incorporating the above-mentioned facts into vital statistics and, concomitant with this, promoting the correct filling out of death certificates, with emphasis on the registration of the medical certification of the cause of death and on the training of pre-medical students and graduate nurses.
22. Protecting the use of the information collected in the civil-registration and vital-statistics system, in such a way as to keep it within the framework of human rights and to maintain respect for people's privacy.
23. Applying the Workshop's guidelines in depth in order to prepare country reports, or state or provincial reports in the case of federal countries, as a form for evaluating the provincial civil-registration and vital-statistics systems.
24. Promoting greater coordination in international cooperation, in

order to avoid contradictions and overlapping in the actions taken with regard to the collection of demographic data.

25. Establishing channels of permanent communication between international organizations and the vital-statistics and civil-registration offices of individual countries, in order to gain access to the advances made in this sphere in various countries of the region.
 26. Promoting horizontal cooperation between countries as a strategy for accelerating the development of vital-statistics and civil-registration systems.
8. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF DIRECTORS OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND DIRECTORS OR CIVIL SERVANTS ORGANICALLY REPRESENTING THE CIVIL-REGISTRATION SYSTEM OF A NATION.

The participants unanimously agreed, by a constituent act, to establish the Latin American Committee of Directors of Civil Registration and Directors or Civil Servants Representing the Civil-Registration System. This should extend not only to the countries attending but also to the other Latin American countries. In those countries in which there is no national civil-registration service, a representative of a similar organization should be incorporated. The text of the constituent act is given below:

CONSTITUENT ACT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF DIRECTORS OF CIVIL
REGISTRATION AND DIRECTORS OR CIVIL SERVANTS
ORGANICALLY REPRESENTING THE CIVIL-REGISTRATION SYSTEM OF A NATION:

In the city of Buenos Aires, Argentine Republic, on the sixth day of the month of December 1991, the National Directors of Civil Registration and the Directors or Civil Servants Representing Civil-Registration Systems who participated in the Latin American Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, considering:

- I. That the civil-registration system is an institution of the greatest importance in the collection of data relating to vital statistics;
- II. That it is therefore of fundamental importance to have an efficient organization for civil registration in order to obtain excellent vital statistics;
- III. That in addition to vital statistics, civil registration fulfils other functions which are of the greatest importance for the organization of the family and for society in general, respect for human rights and the permanent strengthening of the democratic system;
- IV. That it is necessary to invigorate civil registration in a manner focused on bringing closer together those who compile the register and those who are registered;
- V. That it has been shown through the various presentations made by the representatives of the countries participating in the Workshop that there are a number of problems common to those countries in the following fields:
 - (a) Lack of a systematic legal order;
 - (b) The avoidance both of under-registration and of duplicate registration, pursuing the objective of total coverage of

vital data;

- (c) Incorporation of computerization into the systems;
- (d) Coordination with the institutions dealing with vital statistics;
- (e) The lack of periodic publicity campaigns;
- (f) Ensuring that the Governments of the various countries and the various international organizations will give constant support and backing to such systems.

Such circumstances show the need for a constant interchange of information, experience and support. Considering that in order to attain those objectives, it is essential to create an atmosphere of constant interchange, the active Directors or Representatives of Civil Registration participating in this meeting undertake to create the Latin American Committee of Directors of Civil Registration or Civil Servants Representing the Civil-Registration System.

Resolved:

1. To create the Latin American Committee of National Directors of Civil Registration and Directors or Civil Servants Representing the Civil-Registration Systems, which shall consist of the National Directors of the Republics of Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Uruguay, Mexico and Panama, the General Director of the Province of Chaco in Argentina and the Directors or Civil Servants representing Civil Registration in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala and Venezuela, founding and permanent members, who, in witness thereof, have signed this Act, undertaking to legalize its existence as soon as possible and to have it recognized operationally and administratively, through the competent organizations of the United Nations and subject to prior notification of our respective national Governments.

Signed:

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9. CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE WORKSHOP

The closing ceremony was presided over by Argentina's Director of the Civil Registry and Registry of the Capacity of Persons and was also attended by high-level authorities of the Argentine Government.

Mr. Y. C. Yu of the United Nations expressed his gratitude on behalf of the agencies sponsoring the Workshop for the excellent facilities provided by the Argentine Government for the successful development of this Workshop. Next, the Director of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses spoke in recognition of the importance of the fruitful discussions and recommendations produced by the Workshop and expressed his thanks to all participants for their active participation and collaboration.

Thereafter Mrs. Violeta Gonzales Díaz of the United Nations once again thanked the Argentine Government for the splendid cooperation given especially by INDEC and by the Local Organizing Committee. She also made an appeal to countries to put the recommendations of the Workshop into practice and to maintain constant contact with the United Nations Statistical Office.

Finally, the Secretary of Health of the Ministry of Health of Argentina declared the Workshop closed.

Latin American Workshop on
Strategies for Accelerating the
Improvement of Vital
Statistics and Civil Registration
Buenos Aires, Argentina
2-6 December 1991

ANNEX 1: PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORKSHOP

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LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF THE WORKSHOP

Alejandro Giusti, Technical Secretary
of the Workshop (*)
Elida Marconi (*)
José Pirola (*)
Graciela Dinardi (*)

(*) For addresses, see under "Other
Observers - Argentina"

OPENING CEREMONIES: Special Guests

Héctor Montero, National Director of
the National Institute of Statistics
and Censuses (INDEC), Argentina

Fernando Bustelo, Director of UNICEF

Alberto Minujín Zmud
Deputy Director of UNICEF

Benno Sander, Representative of the
OAS in Argentina

Enrique Nájera, Representative of
PAHO in Argentina

Carlos Juliá, National Director of
Sanitary Medicine, Argentina

Elsa Moreno, Secretary of Health,
Argentina

Martha Blanco, General Supervisor of
the Central Bank of the Argentine
Republic

Ana Jaramillo, Coordinator of the
Coordination Unit of PRONATASS

Haydée Birgin, Director of the
Commission for Natural Resources and
the Human Environment

Guzmán Novoa, General Director of
Civil Registration, Argentina

CLOSING CEREMONY:
Special Guests

Chairman of the Workshop: José
Hernando Pirota (Argentina)

Technical Secretary: Alejandro Giusti

Secretary of Health of the Ministry of
Health and Social Action of the
Nation: Alberto Massa (Argentina)

Director of the National Institute of
Statistics and Censuses: Héctor
Montero (Argentina)

National Director of Sanitary
Medicine: Carlos María Juliá
(Argentina)

Director of the National Register of
Persons: Eduardo D'Amico (Argentina)
(representing José Luis Manzano,
Minister of the Interior)

Latin American Workshop on Strategies
for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital
Statistics and Civil Registration Systems
2-6 December 1991
Buenos Aires, Argentina

ANNEX 2: DETAILED AGENDA OF THE WORKSHOP

Monday, 2 December

Morning

8:30 - 10:00 Registration. Issuing of documents
10:00 - 11:00 Opening of the Workshop
First Plenary Meeting:
11:00 - 11:30 International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of
Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems. United
Nations Statistical Office (WCRVS/91/1)
11:30 - 12:00 "Outline for preparing a country report on the current status
of vital statistics and civil registration systems" and
"Review and assessment of national civil registration and vital
statistics systems" (WCRVS/91/2, WCRVS/91/3): UNSO
12:00 - 12:30 Discussions. Questions and answers
12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

Afternoon First Plenary Meeting (continued):

Situation of civil registration and of the vital-statistics systems
in countries. Preliminary outlines of the strategies for
accelerating the improvement of the systems.
Presentation of National Reports:
14:00 - 14:30 Argentina (WCRVS/91/4)
14:30 - 15:00 Brazil (WCRVS/91/5)
15:00 - 15:30 Mexico (WCRVS/91/6)
15:30 - 16:00 Venezuela (WCRVS/91/7)
16:00 - 16:15 Coffee
16:15 - 18:00 Discussion

Tuesday, 3 December

Morning

9:00 - 9:30 Colombia (WCRVS/91/8)
9:30 - 10:00 Chile (WCRVS/91/9)
10:00 - 10:30 Ecuador (WCRVS/91/10)

Afternoon

14:00 - 14:30 Costa Rica (WCRVS/91/12)
14:30 - 15:00 Guatemala (WCRVS/91/13)
15:00 - 15:30 Panama (WCRVS/91/14)
15:30 - 15:45 Coffee
15:45 - 17:30 Discussion
17:30 Showing of a video on civil registries in Argentina (Mobile
civil-registration unit in remote areas, Province of Chaco)

Wednesday, 4 December

Morning

9:00 - 10:00 Working Groups
10:00 - 10:15 Coffee
10:15 - 12:30 Working Groups (continued) - Discussion of the main problems and outlines of national strategies for their solution.
12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

Afternoon

14:00 - 16:00 Various sources of data and methods of vital statistics (WCRVS/91/15): UNSO
16:00 - 16:15 Coffee
Second Plenary Meeting:
Main uses of civil-registration and vital-statistics documents:
16:15 - 16:45 Uses of vital records and statistics for developmental programmes (WCRVS/91/16): IIVRS
16:45 - 17:15 The importance of statistics of births and deaths in health programmes and services (WCRVS/91/17): PAHO
17:15 - 17:45 Towards a systematic evaluation and permanent improvement of the quality of statistics on vital data: Argentina (WCRVS/91/18).
17:45 - 18:15 Discussion

Thursday, 5 December

Morning

Second Plenary Meeting (continued):
8:30 - 9:00 Main uses of civil-registration documents and their importance: the case of Costa Rica (WCRVS/91/19)
9:00 - 9:30 Uses of civil-registration documents for identification services: the case of Chile (WCRVS/91/20):
9:30 - 10:30 Role of civil-registration documents in the protection of the rights of the child, of the family and of individuals (WCRVS/91/21): Inter-American Institute of the Child
10:30 - 10:45 Coffee
10:45 - 11:15 Discussion
11:15 - 12:30 Working Groups - National strategies for intersectoral and intrasectoral participation in the commitment to implement the programme for strengthening the systems.
12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

Afternoon

14:00 - 15:30 Working Groups (continued). Presentation of conclusions, recommendations, strategies
15:30 - 15:45 Coffee
Third Plenary Meeting:
Computational means and other modern means for recording, storage and retrieval of civil-registration documents and the processing of vital statistics:
16:45 - 17:15 Modern technology for the storage and retrieval of civil-registration files and the processing of vital statistics (WCRVS/91/22): IIVRS
17:15 - 17:45 Database for civil registration and vital statistics: the case of Chile (WCRVS/91/23):
17:45 - 18:30 Discussion

Friday, 6 December

Morning

Third Plenary Meeting (continued):

8:30 - 9:00 From a centralized system towards a decentralized system of vital statistics: the experience of Mexico (WCRVS/91/24)

9:00 - 9:30 Experiences with computerization of civil registration (WCRVS/91/25): Denmark

9:30 - 10:00 Computer-based vital statistics. Issues to consider. Some Danish experiences (WCRVS/91/26): Denmark

10:00 - 10:30 Role and status of civil registration (population registration) and vital statistics systems - The case of Norway (WCRVS/91/27)

10:30 - 10:45 Coffee

10:45 - 12:00 Discussion

12:00 - 12:30 The importance of vital statistics in a communal system of statistical information (WCRVS/91/28): CIENES

12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

Afternoon

Fourth Plenary Meeting:

Potential role of international, regional and bilateral agencies in supporting the efforts and needs of countries for implementing the international programme:

14:00 - 16:00 (a) Role of the agency sponsoring the international programme (UNSO, UNFPA, PAHO/WHO, IIVRS)

(b) Prospects and challenges for international cooperation in the improvement of vital statistics (WCRVS/91/29):

(c) Objectives and activities of INDEC project 14: redesigning of socio-demographic statistics in Argentina (WCRVS/91/30)

(d) Inter-American Conference on Statistics

16:00 - 16:15 Coffee

16:15 - 17:45 Review and adoption of the final report

17:45 - 18:00 Closing

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ANNEX 3: LISTS OF DOCUMENTS OF THE WORKSHOP

1. Provisional Agenda: WCRVS/91/L.1
2. Detailed Agenda of the Workshop: WCRVS/91/L.2/Rev.1
3. Lists of documents of the Workshop: WCRVS/91/L.3/Rev.1
4. Lists of participants in the Workshop: WCRVS/91/L.4/Rev.1
5. United Nations Statistical Office. "International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems". (WCRVS/91/1)
6. United Nations Statistical Office. "Outline for preparing a country report on the current status of vital statistics and civil registration systems" and "Review and assessment of national civil registration and vital statistics systems" (WCRVS/91/2, WCRVS/91/3): UNSO
7. Situation of civil registries and of vital-statistics systems in the participating countries. Preliminary outlines of the strategies for accelerating the improvement of the systems:
 - (a) Argentina: WCRVS/91/4
 - (b) Brazil: WCRVS/91/5
 - (c) Mexico: WCRVS/91/6
 - (d) Venezuela: WCRVS/91/7
 - (e) Colombia: WCRVS/91/8
 - (f) Chile: WCRVS/91/9
 - (g) Ecuador: WCRVS/91/10
 - (h) Uruguay: WCRVS/91/11
 - (i) Costa Rica: WCRVS/91/12
 - (j) Guatemala: WCRVS/91/13
 - (k) Panama: WCRVS/91/14
8. United Nations Statistical Office. "Otras fuentes de datos y métodos de estadísticas vitales" ["Other sources of data and methods of vital statistics"]: WCRVS/91/15
9. International Institute for Vital Registration Statistics. "Uses of vital records and statistics for social and economic developmental programs": WCRVS/91/16
10. Pan American Health Organization. "La importancia de las estadísticas de nacimientos y defunciones en programas y servicios de salud" ["The importance of statistics of births and deaths in health programmes and services": WCRVS/91/17
11. Government of Argentina. "Hacia una evaluación sistemática y mejoramiento permanente de la calidad de las estadísticas sobre hechos vitales" ["Towards a systematic evaluation and permanent improvement of the quality

- of statistics on vital data"]: WCRVS/91/18
12. Government of Costa Rica. "Principales usos de las actas de registro civil y su importancia: el caso de Costa Rica" ["Main uses of civil-registration documents and their importance: the case of Costa Rica"] WCRVS/91/19
 13. Government of Chile. "Usos de las actas de registro civil para servicios de identificación: el caso de Chile" ["Uses of civil-registration documents for identification services: the case of Chile"]: WCRVS/91/20
 14. Inter-American Institute of the Child. "Rol de las actas del registro civil en la protección de los derechos del niño, de la familia y de los individuos" ["Role of civil-registration documents in the protection of the rights of the child, of the family and of individuals"]: WCRVS/91/21
 15. International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics. "Role of technology in the civil registration process": WCRVS/91/22
 16. Government of Chile. "Base de datos para registro civil y estadísticas vitales: el caso de Chile" ["Database for civil registration and vital statistics: the case of Chile"]: WCRVS/91/23
 17. Government of Mexico. "De un sistema centralizado hacia un sistema descentralizado de estadísticas vitales: la experiencia de México" ["From a centralized system towards a decentralized system of vital statistics: the experience of Mexico"]: WCRVS/91/24
 18. Government of Denmark. "Experiences with computerization of civil registration": WCRVS/91/25
 19. Government of Denmark. "Computer-based vital statistics. Issues to consider. Some Danish experiences": WCRVS/91/26
 20. Government of Norway. "Role and status of civil registration (population registration) and vital statistics systems - The case of Norway": WCRVS/91/27
 21. Inter-American Centre for the Teaching of Statistics. "La importancia de las estadísticas vitales en un sistema de información estadística comunal" ["The importance of vital statistics in a communal system of statistical information"]: WCRVS/91/28
 22. Latin American Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Latin American Centre for Demography. "Perspectivas y desafíos de la cooperación internacional en el mejoramiento de las estadísticas vitales" ["Prospects and challenges for international cooperation in the improvement of vital statistics"]: WCRVS/91/29
 23. INDEC and World Bank: "Objetivos y actividades del subproyecto 14: Rediseño de estadísticas socio-demográficas en Argentina" ["Objectives and activities of subproject 14: Redesigning of socio-demographic statistics in Argentina"]: WCRVS/91/30