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**AFRICAN WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIES FOR ACCELERATING THE IMPROVEMENT
OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 5 TO 9 DECEMBER 1994**

STATISTICAL DIVISION

ECONOMIC COMMISSION

UNITED NATIONS

FOR AFRICA

**PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF CIVIL REGISTRATION
AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS IN AFRICA (DRAFT)**

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS IN AFRICA (DRAFT)

I. GOALS

The workshop adopted the following goals for the year 2000 on Civil Registration coverage of Births and Deaths and Vital Statistics:

A. BIRTHS

1. Those countries that have below 30 percent registration coverage should increase to at least 50 percent.
2. Those countries that have between 30 to 50 percent registration coverage should raise their coverage up to at least 70 percent.
3. Those countries that have between 50 to 70 percent should raise their coverage to at least 80 percent.

B. DEATHS

1. Those countries that have under 15 percent should raise death registration coverage to at least 30 percent.
2. Those countries that have between 15 and 30 percent should raise their coverage to at least 50 percent.
3. Those countries that have 30 to 50 percent coverage should raise to at least 70 percent coverage.
4. Those countries that have 50 to 70 percent coverage should raise to at least 80 percent.

C. VITAL STATISTICS

The following goal was adopted on vital statistics. The agency responsible for vital statistics should disseminate vital statistics on a regular and timely basis.

II. STRATEGIES

In order to attain these goals, the Workshop adopted the following strategies:

1. **Government Commitment**

Governments should set up interministerial Steering Committees to oversee the efficient functioning of the civil registration and vital statistics systems. Cooperation and assistance should be also sought from international, regional, bilateral, non-governmental organizations and other private organizations within the country.

2. **Registration laws**

Countries should review existing laws concerning civil registration and related laws such as the vital statistics law, the health code, the family code, the municipal code, the civil code, etc. in order to make civil registration comprehensive, compulsory and effective nationwide and free of charge.

3. **Registration facilities**

The civil registration system should move from a passive to an active system. Toward this purpose, local registrars should be civil servants not subject to political waves, be given periodical training, and opportunities for career development. In addition, health personnel, midwives, tribal chiefs, religious authorities and other local authorities may be appointed as notifiers to aide the local registrars to enhance registration coverage.

4. **Public Awareness**

The workshop attached great importance to increase public awareness of civil registration and vital statistics systems. For this purpose, each country may set up a special committee of local experts. Awareness creation should also be promoted by increasing the demand and use of vital records.

5. **Training**

The Workshop recognized the need for training of civil registration and vital statistical personnel at all levels (national, regional, local) as well as other personnel involved in civil registration and vital statistics activities. For these purposes, manuals and technical documentation should be prepared by the agency(ies) concerned with civil registration and vital statistics systems.

6. **Logistic support**

The Workshop emphasized the need for the government to provide the civil registration and vital statistics systems with an efficient logistic support including, transport, communications, printing, storage, archives and processing facilities.

7. **Registration records**

Countries should put in place an efficient system capable of conveniently store and retrieve civil registration records and issuance of certificates.

8. **Coordination and cooperation**

Countries should ensure close coordination and effective cooperation among all agencies involved in civil registration and vital statistics activities. To this end, it is recommended that the registration agency provide registration records to the vital statistics agency in a timely manner and that a National Committee on Civil Registration and Vital statistics be set up. The Committee should also be comprised by representatives of the main end- users of the data and information generated by the systems.

9. **Monitoring and evaluation**

Countries should put in place an effective mechanism for continuing monitoring and evaluation of the civil registration and vital statistics systems, including clear assignment of responsibilities.

10. **Technical and financial assistance**

The UNFPA and other multilateral and bilateral agencies are urged to lend technical and financial assistance to countries in the region, and to enhance the scope and implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Division and other concerned agencies, should prepare manuals for training of civil registration and vital statistics personnel.

11. **Vital statistics**

Countries should increase the capability of data processing of the Agency responsible for vital statistics to ensure their timely production and dissemination.

12. **Implementation of the Plan of Action**

The Workshop recommended to ECA/UNSTAT to set up a monitoring mechanism to evaluate the attainment of goals of the present plan of action.