Civil Registration as Source of Vital Statistics

United Nations Statistics Division
Civil registration

- Civil registration as a source of vital statistics
  *Principles and Recommendations, para 279-299*
Civil registration method and system

Definition
- Civil registration is
  - Continuous
  - Permanent
  - Compulsory
  - Universal
- Recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population
- As provided through law, decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements of the country

Primary purpose – establishing documents provided by law
Secondary purpose – ideal source of vital statistics
Civil registration method and system

- **Civil registration method**
  - Refers to the procedure employed in gathering the basic information on the incidence and characteristics of vital events that occur in the population of the country
  - Upon which the preparation of vital records with legal value
  - And the production of vital statistics is based
  - Mandated by law

- **Civil registration system**
  - Institutional, legal and technical settings needed for the performance of civil registration functions in a technical, sound, coordinated and standardized manner
  - Functions include
    - Recording vital events
    - Storing, safekeeping and retrieval of vital records
    - Protection of confidentiality
    - Issuing certificates and other customer service
    - Reporting information on vital events for statistical purposes
    - Providing information to other government agencies, such as ministry of health, population registers, pension funds systems, electoral services, personal identification services etc.
Civil registration method and system

- **Fundamental role of the civil registration system**
  - Provision of legal instruments to individuals
  - Facts relating to existence
  - Identity
  - Civil status
  - Family status

- **Legal and protective function**
  - Legal identity
  - Human rights
    - Directly linked to registration, such as the right to be registered and to have a name, as per Article 7 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child
    - Derived from the fact that the person is registered, such as the right to vote, pursuant to article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- **Administrative advantages**
  - Access to services

- **Statistical advantages**
Vital events

- Births
- Deaths
- Foetal deaths
- Marriages
- Divorces
- Annulments
- Judicial separations
- Adoptions
- Legitimations
- Recognitions
Legal framework - components

- **Proof of registration**
  - Authorizing officials to issue documents certifying the facts of registration

- **Statistical reports**
  - Specify the agency where statistical forms need to be sent
  - Deadlines for submitting statistical forms
  - Cooperation and division of labor

- **Inspection and penalties**
  - Oversight procedures and authority
  - Penalties

- **Funding**
  - Designates source of funding
  - Funding procedures
Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3 for South American countries
Santiago, Chile, 9-12 November 2015
Civil registration principles

- **Compulsory**
  - Registration of a vital event is compulsory by law
  - Hence the importance of the legal framework
  - Consequences for not complying with the law, yet
  - Better to relay on incentives rather than penalties

- **Universal**
  - Applies to the whole territory
  - To all the population
  - To all citizens aboard

- **Continuous and permanent**
  - Existence of a civil service agency

- **Confidential**
  - Integrity of individual information and its protection from misuse
  - Limited only by the need to certify individual information
Concluding remarks

- Civil registration apparatus is government operated
  - Oriented to provide individual services
  - Legal protection
  - Human rights
  - Legal proof of civil status
  - Access to services
  - Production of vital statistics

- Civil registration method
  - Registration procedures and protocols

- Civil registration system
  - Entity in charge of implementing the method

- Principles
  - Compulsory
  - Universal
  - Continuous and permanent
  - Confidential