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Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3, for African English-speaking countries[1]

Addis Ababa
2 – 5 December 2014

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[1] This document has been produced without formal editing.

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I. Introduction

A. Background and objective of the meeting

1.   Vital statistics and their subsequent analysis and interpretation are essential for setting targets and evaluating social and economic plans, including the monitoring of health and population intervention programmes, and the measurement of important demographic indicators of levels of living or quality of life, such as expectation of life at birth and the infant mortality rate. Reliable vital statistics are essential for producing timely and accurate population estimates and demographic and health statistics. In the context of the importance of vital statistics, there is universal acknowledgement of the urgent need to improve their availability, timeliness and quality.

2. Many African countries do not have adequate legal or statistical recording systems for vital events. In 2010, during the 1st Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration, Member States endorsed a standing regional platform to advance civil registration and vital statistics policies in Africa. In 2012, the 2nd Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration launched the regional initiative to improve CRVS "Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS)". The APAI-CRVS is a regional programme developed under the leadership of ECA to provide management and programmatic guidance to the regional agenda to reform and improve CRVS systems.

3. The Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3, for African English-speaking countries was held from 2 to 5 December 2014, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was jointly organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)- African Centre for Statistics.

4. The objectives of the workshop are to: (a) provide training to countries on the new revision of the United Nations principles and recommendations on vital statistics in terms of concepts, definitions, data collection methods, compilation, sources and the implementation of international statistical standards; (b) assess the current status of the civil registration and vital statistics system in participating countries, identifying gaps to be filled as well as good practices; (c) examine the availability of data that countries are able to provide to UNSD through the *Demographic Yearbook* data collection, and (d) provide an opportunity for participants - statisticians and registrars – to share their experiences, to strengthen the regional exchange of practices and formulate national improvement strategies.

5. This report summarizes the presentations and discussions made during the workshop; documents countries' experiences in the collection and compilation of vital statistics and highlights the major conclusions and recommendations for the improvement of the civil registration and vital statistics systems in the region.

B. Participation

6.   Seventeen English-speaking countries in Africa were represented in the workshop – Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Participants included those from National Statistical Offices who have experience with the collection and compilation of vital statistics and those from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Justice or Ministry of Health who are responsible for the registration process of vital events in their respective countries. The list of participants is included in Annex 1.

C. Opening session

UNSD

7.   Mr. Srdjan Mrkic from the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch welcomed the participants to the workshop. He said that this workshop was an excellent opportunity to present the new revision of the United Nations guidelines and standards on civil registration and vital statistics. He highlighted that the workshop was organized jointly by the UN Statistics Division and the African Centre for Statistics, in the spirit of reinforcing a long-term relationship and pooling resources together to better serve countries. Mr. Mrkic stated that the workshop would also assess the current status of national capacities in compiling vital statistics and the sources for vital statistics. In addition, the workshop would provide a platform for countries to learn from each other. Mr. Mrkic expected that the workshop would stimulate fruitful discussions and also generate useful recommendations.

8.   Mr. Mrkic then presented the publications provided as workshop materials, namely the third revision of the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, the Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Developing Information, Education and Communication, and the Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance. Further, he guided participants through the workshop layout, rationale and organization of work.

UNECA

9.   Mr. Raj Gautam Mitra from the African Centre for Statistics welcomed the participants to the workshop and to the Africa Hall, a historical place for ECA and the continent. He expressed satisfaction in regards to the UNSD-UNECA collaboration, coming together to invite as many participants as possible in this workshop. Mr. Mitra said that these joint efforts would continue in the future, particularly in terms of running a similar workshop for French-speaking countries.

10. Mr. Mitra emphasized that the focus of workshops on these topics had changed from a purely statistics forum to also include civil registration, in recognition to the inter-relationship that one has with the other. He further stated that this is also being reflected at the national level, where National Statistical Offices and Civil Registrars are

increasingly working in partnership. Finally, he invited participants to conduct trainings in their countries that mirror this workshop.

D. Organisation of the workshop

11. The full agenda of the workshop is included in Annex 2. An abridged version is shown below:

1. Registration of participants
2. Opening
3. The third revision of the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System
4. Uses and guiding principles of vital statistics
5. Topics and themes to be covered in a vital statistics system
5a. Group discussion: Topics and themes to be covered in a civil registration based vital statistics system.
6. Quality assessment and assurance in the civil registration vital statistics system
7. Population registers, population censuses and surveys as a source of vital statistics
8. The role of health institutions
9. Civil registration as a source of vital statistics
10. National-level designation of responsibilities and organizational structures of a civil registration system
11. Local-level designation of responsibilities of a civil registration system
12. Civil registration process: place, time, cost, late registration
13. Tools for assessing a civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa
14. Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS)
14a. Experiences of countries in implementation of APAI-CRVS: successes and challenges
15. International collection of vital statistics and regional response rates for vital statistics
16. Country team work time
17. Strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa
18. Wrap-up /Closing

12. Most sessions were plenary with presentations followed by floor discussions that provided participants with a forum for debates, sharing of experiences and exchange of views. Presentations for sessions 10, 11 and 12 were delivered consecutively, and then an overarching floor discussion took place.

13. Session 16 consisted of having representatives from each country work as a team on analyzing the current status of their civil registration and vital statistics system and formulating improvement strategies. Participants presented the results of this exercise in session 17.

14. The workshop sessions were chaired alternatively by UNSD (Mr. Srdjan Mrkic) and UNECA (Mr. Raj Gautam Mitra and Mr. Genene Bizuneh).

15. In preparation for the workshop, participants were asked to submit two assignments[2] (Annex 3 and Annex 4). These consisted in a filling out a questionnaire and drafting a report. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect information on the organizational and technical aspects of the national civil registration and vital statistics system, and to assess the state of the development and methods of evaluation in the civil registration system. In turn, the report touched upon compilation of vital statistics from the civil registration system and other sources, factors hampering this process and improvement plans.

II. Summary of presentations and discussions

Session 3. The third revision of the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System

16. A representative of the United Nations Statistics Division introduced the history and development of the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System since the original version from 1953 to the latest revision this year.

17. The rationale for the third and latest revision came from the need to restructure the principles and recommendations along the lines of distinguishing between vital statistics from its sources. In addition, emerging issues, such as population registers, health institutions records and causes of death needed to be elaborated upon; and the release of new versions of international classifications and definitions made it necessary to align the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System.

18. The process to revise the principles and recommendations started with a concept note circulated to all national statistical offices, together with a set of questions on the relevance of international standards for civil registration and vital statistics. Thirty-five replies were received to this questionnaire. The next step was to conduct an expert group meeting gathering national, regional and international experts from 15 countries and seven international and regional organizations, who discussed at length on the content of the publication, the overall need for revision and the proposed table of contents.

19. The major recommendations emanating from the expert group meeting were sharpening the distinction between vital statistics and its sources; elaborating on population registers; re-visiting core topics; addressing the role of health institutions within the vital statistics system; aligning the principles and recommendations with current international classifications; and updating and upgrading all the parts with contemporary approaches to producing quality official statistics

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[2] The results and analysis of the pre-workshop assignments will be presented in detail in a forthcoming Technical Report.

20. The resulting revision of the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System consists of three parts, namely The Vital Statistics System; Sources of Vital Statistics; and Key Elements of the Vital Statistics System. In addition, the publication comprises three annexes, namely Recommended tabulations; Index, glossary; and References. Each part was thoroughly explored by the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division during session 3 of the workshop.

21. Delegations thanked UNSD for such a comprehensive work done with the third revision of the Principles and Recommendations, pointing out the timeliness of the publication, in light of the challenges being faced by National Statistical Offices in the region to produce vital statistics from civil registration data. For many years African countries have been collecting these statistics from censuses and surveys, treating civil registration only as complimentary source. Now, participants considered, the mandate is clearer, as the revision clarifies the sources separately. The most comprehensive vital statistics come from only civil registration, as these are the actual figures, without the sampling errors that surveys have.

22. During the discussion, a question was asked on how to link the civil registration authority and the statistical office for vital statistics purposes. It was noted that there were problems in harmonizing data collected by these institutions and that each country has a particular institutional arrangement. For example, it was mentioned that the National Population Commission in Nigeria is the agency charged with civil registration, while in the Gambia, registration is part of the Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, the arrangements of civil registration are built around national laws, so lawmakers also need an understanding of civil registration and vital statistics issues. Therefore, it was suggested that stake holders, other than Civil Registrar and National Statistical Office, be included in this kind of workshops.

23. A representative of UNECA pointed out that it is difficult to communicate with a unique agency responsible for civil registration, as some national laws have separate arrangements for different vital events. Often, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Population Register, among other agencies, play a role in the civil registration and vital statistics systems.

24. It was highlighted that disregarding which government agency conducts civil registration in a given country, compilation and processing must be done by the National Statistical Office.

25. Certification and codification of causes of death was mentioned as a key issue deserving to be treated in-depth, as countries fail to produce quality data. In this respect, coordination and institutional arrangements play a most important role. Moreover, certification of death becomes a challenge particularly in rural areas.

26. A question on the treatment of same sex marriages was posed. A representative of UNSD clarified that although this subject is not discussed in the Principles and Recommendations, the definition of legal marriage depends on country legislation. As

such, countries are expected to follow their relevant law and register these marriages and their characteristics according to the core and additional topics.

Session 4. Uses and guiding principles of vital statistics

27. A representative of UNSD made a presentation on the use of vital statistics and the functioning of the vital statistics system, which elaborated on the definition and essential features of vital statistics, vital events, and vital statistics system. The vital statistics system is a set of three interacting components, namely legal registration, statistical reporting and collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics. These components need to be defined adequately in a legal framework, providing clear designation of duties and responsibilities.

28. The presentation included a diagram outlining the structure and interdependencies of the components, as well as the vital events to be recorded and the range of stakeholders involved in the system. In this regard, the role of integration, coordination and collaboration was emphasized, recommending uniform regulations, an inter-agency or interdepartmental coordination committee and a communication plan, among other measures and mechanisms. The need to have a strategy of quality assurance and assessment was also stressed.

29. The three principles of a vital statistics system – continuity, confidentiality and regular dissemination were elaborated on. In addition, the sources of vital statistics were presented, highlighting civil registration as a critical source and distinguishing population censuses and household (health) surveys as complementary sources. The presentation gave a priority list in terms of vital events, grouping them in three levels. The first level includes births, deaths and foetal deaths; the second level comprises marriages and divorces; and the third encompasses annulments, judicial separations, adoptions, legitimations and recognitions.

30. During the discussion, there was some confusion regarding the equivalence of the term "vital registration" versus "civil registration". A representative from UNSD clarified that the correct term is "civil registration, while the representative from UNECA recognized that there are different situations across countries. Particularly, in the French-speaking countries, civil registration is called "civil status registration". Thus, to avoid misunderstandings, the term "vital registration" is often used.

31. Participants acknowledged the importance of interagency coordination and confidentiality. Additionally, they expressed a keen interest in their practicalities. For instance, in Uganda, the laws provide for accessibility for civil registration data. A representative of UNSD explained that in most countries, the civil registration authorities fill out statistical forms that are sent to the National Statistical Office for compilation. These forms normally exclude names and other sensitive information protected by confidentiality. The laws need to ensure that there is restricted access to protected information, and protocols must be in place to designate who can have access to it. A representative of UNECA added that in some countries, the National Statistical Office

receives only the statistical part of the registration record while the Civil Registrar keeps the legal part (that includes names and other sensitive information).

32. Regarding interagency coordination, a representative from UNECA mentioned examples of practical modalities, such as establishing a committee and having temporary secondments of personnel from and to the Civil Registrar and the National Statistical Office.

33. Delegations appreciated that synchronization of the civil registration law and the statistics law is crucial, however, there are countries where this is not the case, such as in Namibia.

34. There was a question on how the priority level of events was allocated. A representative from UNSD clarified that the priorities were set according to the importance of the event in terms of demographic analysis. No reliable and accurate population analysis can be made without births and deaths statistics. The second priority deals with family formation dynamics, and the third priority has to do with social and legal constructs that have a lesser impact on statistics.

35. Clarification between basic and complementary sources of vital statistics was also requested. The most critical source is civil registration, followed by complimentary sources such as censuses and surveys. Finally, in the absence of civil registration, additional sources such as censuses, surveys, sample registration and health records are used.

36. There was interest in hearing about the recommended variables, particularly in the framework of the new registration system in Lesotho, where there was wide discussion on whether to include legal guardianship (custody of lone children) and orphanhood. A representative from UNSD advised to follow the law for the cases of legal custody, and pointed out that the cases of orphanhood are more complex. From the legal point of view, the major issue is how to determine whether or not a child is orphan. Birth and death certificates of the parents can be reviewed if available; if not, it is recommended to interview witnesses. The issue was recognized as pertinent for the reality in Lesotho.

37. Unfortunately, in some countries, such as Uganda, civil registration is not used at all to produce vital statistics. In this context, delegations asked what minimum level of registration of vital events is needed to use these data for vital statistics and population estimates. Both UNSD and UNECA stressed that data with any coverage can be used, as long as a good estimate of coverage has been produced, and all related documentation on how this coverage estimate was reached. Furthermore, if a subnational area has a good coverage it can be used even if this is not the case for the whole country.

38. There was some concern regarding losing information when an adoption occurs, as the adoptive change the child's name. Botswana shared its practice in cases of adoption; the law allows for updating names, but the old record should be kept together with adoption record permanently. A representative of UNSD called attention to the legal systems, where there are substantive laws and procedural laws. The civil registration is a

procedural law, therefore the question on orphans and change of names are beyond United Nations recommendations.

39. Participants mentioned the prominence of conducting surveys to collect data that cannot be collected through civil registration, as well as in-depth sample surveys for validation and evaluation of completeness and accuracy. The greatest drawback of in-depth surveys is their high cost due to large sample sizes, which makes them infrequent.

40. There was also a rich discussion on information for small geographical areas. Some delegations were of the opinion that, because there is no geographical frame in civil registration, unlike in censuses and surveys, it is impossible to produce statistics at low geographical levels. UNSD made clear that civil registration comes second best for small areas information to the population census. Data at the lowest level may not be published because of confidentiality issues, but can indeed be used. UNECA agreed and advised matching the small area identifiers used in the census to the civil registration, i.e. using the same geographical frame to produce tabulations and compiling statistics at the geographical areas given in the frame.

41. A question was asked on why collecting usual residence in the registration of births if it is only relevant at the time of birth. A representative of UNSD indicated that the usual residence definition depends on each country, and is not only useful for statistical purposes, but also for governance. A representative of UNECA added that national laws determine where an event is to be registered, normally the place of occurrence. Recording the place of usual residence is needed to make the distinction from place of occurrence.

42. Finally, a concern was raised that in some countries such as Tanzania, Botswana, Swaziland, among others, traditions dictate that a name cannot be given to a baby until 40 or 20 days old. This results in a sizeable proportion of births that are not registered right away or at all. UNSD advised to follow the legal framework in each country and reminded participants that based on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, *a child should be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name; and States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind*. On the other hand, UNECA provided the example of Kenya in order to increase birth registration, where births can be registered without giving a name, allowing inserting it at a later stage.

Session 5. Topics and themes to be covered in a vital statistics system

43. A presentation was made by UNSD reviewing the core and additional topics in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 3;* explaining the interdependence between global recommendations and national experiences; and elaborating on the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of topics at the national level A topic was defined as a statistical variable that collects information on the event and on the persons involved in the event.

44. A typology of topics was also given, first in terms of priority, in recognition to the fact that not all countries will be able to collect information on all topics; core topics represent an immediate goal. Secondly, in terms of how the information was collected; it either can be a direct topic if the information was given directly by the informant at the time of registration, or it can be a derived topic if the information was inferred from the data collected at the time of registration.

45. The presentation focused on describing all direct and derived topics for each vital event to be recorded in the civil registration system. It elaborated on how birth and deaths statistics could be derived from a civil registration system and what items are recommended to be collected in the statistical reports for vital events. A quick glance was taken at the topics that can be collected from other sources, such as censuses and surveys.

46. Some examples of tabulations using the recommended topics were given. Tabulations can contain absolute figures on the vital event, classified by certain characteristics, or relative indicators that involve the population at risk of the vital event. The presentation concluded by pointing out that there is no substitute for a well-designed and well-maintained civil registration system as a source of data for the production of vital statistics.

47. The first issue raised during the discussion was related to the quantity of information for the registrar. Some delegations noted that it is a lot and this causes the risk of losing the informant half way during the registration process. It was responded by a UNSD representative that the core topics are the minimum recommended set of topics to be collected, and that it is mostly basic information that, apart from statistical purposes, is needed for legal purposes, so the registrar would collect it anyhow.

48. Other delegations were satisfied with the number of variables to be collected by registrar, as it is needed information to satisfy users' demands. Participants committed to convey the message of this responsibility in their respective countries and exhorted UNSD and UNECA to keep working towards the implementation and use of the Principles and Recommendations. They also noted the need to have policy makers in these workshops so they understand the importance of civil registration in the production of vital statistics.

49. The following concern touched upon the difficulties to collect causes of death and the definition of foetal death. Participants were pointed to the definition spelled out in the Principles and Recommendations *"death prior to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy; the death is indicated by the fact that after such separation the foetus does not breathe or show any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord or definite movement of voluntary muscles (note that this definition broadly includes all terminations of pregnancy other than live births)"*. The publication also specifies that foetal deaths are often termed "sitllbirths", although these strictly refer to late foetal deaths. I was also noted that the legal requirements for the registration of foetal deaths vary from country to country. Gambia shared the challenges faced to register deaths in general and foetal deaths in particular.

50. There was also confusion why, in the case of censuses and surveys, fertility questions are recommended to be asked to women aged 15 or older, some participants wondered whether this is in contradiction of rights of girls in the context of early marriage. It was responded by a UNSD representative that early fertility is a reality in many regions of the world, and as such, it needs to be measured and monitored, precisely because of girls' human rights and for public health purposes.

51. The issue of orphans' registration was raised, asking which topics should be collected for these cases. In the case of South Africa, for instance, orphan registration is a segregated responsibility, shared by relatives, child services, hospitals and the Civil Registrar; this can dilute action and makes the role of each stakeholder unclear. Both UNSD and UNECA agreed that, this being a recurring challenge in Africa, there might be need for regional guidelines that consider the procedures for registering orphan hood.

52. Botswana shared their complications in registering births that are result of artificial fertilization and births from surrogate mothers. They wondered who should be registered as the parents. UNSD responded that there is no international agreement on surrogacy; therefore it is impossible to give a recommendation.

53. Another issue that came out during the discussion was the designation of informants for registration purposes. It was highlighted by a representative of UNSD that according to the Principles and Recommendations, specific determination of informants for each type of event should be clearly and unequivocally established in the national civil registration law. For live births, foetal deaths and infant deaths the recommended informant should be the head of the institution (or designee) if the birth occurred in an institution, or the mother, the father, the attendant at the delivery, the nearest relative of the mother or any other adult person having knowledge of the facts; for adult deaths the informant should be the head of the institution (or designee) if the death occurred in an institution, the nearest relative or any other adult person having knowledge of the facts; for marriages the informant should be the bride and the bridegroom; and for divorce the informant should be either one of the parties or the divorce petitioner.

Session 6. Quality assessment and assurance in the civil registration vital statistics system

54. A presentation was made by UNSD on the importance of maintaining high standards of quality in civil registration and vital statistics; the quality basic framework was presented in detail, exploring standards and a range of methods. Evaluation activities are essential for improving systems that have deficiencies and maintaining systems that function satisfactorily. To maintain the goal of universal coverage, central and sub-national registration offices need to establish regular protocols to assure that all local registration areas are properly performing registration functions. The protocols should also examine other quantitative and qualitative aspects of the registration of vital events. In addition to internal management and surveillance protocols, objective assessments by external authorities are also recommended. There are two elements in the evaluation framework that are complimentary to each other: quality assurance and assessment.

Quality assurance deals with the process for producing information, while quality assessment has more to do with information that has already been produced.

55. Quality assurance encompasses each stage of the operations of civil registration and vital statistics systems, i.e. collection, transmission to electronic format, processing and dissemination. The registration authority must ensure that all local registration areas carry out the required functions, that every vital event has a record in the system, and that all local offices transmit the records to a higher-level registration office.

56. Quality assessment entails specific studies that aim to answer specific questions. These questions could relate to the coverage of the registration of a vital event at the country level or in a smaller area, the accuracy of one of the variables recorded or published in vital statistics or the overall status of civil registration and vital statistics systems. Quality assessment exercises can be conducted regularly or on an ad hoc basis.

57. The quality of data should be measured according to the standards of completeness, correctness or accuracy, availability and timeliness. The methods used to assess data quality can be divided into direct and indirect methods. Direct methods consist mainly in matching registration records with records from an independent source. Several independent sources – civil registration records (for an independent vital event), administrative and social records, population census and sample survey records, and dual record system – may be used for making a direct evaluation. Indirect methods involve demographic analysis. The following methods were described: comparison of trends, delayed registration, comparison with census data and comparison of rates.

58. Advantages of direct methods include a more accurate assessment of registration completeness and that they have the capacity of indicating the sources of under or overregistration, particularly if the test is carefully designed and can also improve registration by identifying unregistered vital events. On the other hand, their limitations include high costs, a heavy dependence of accuracy upon the choice of the second source of records, which is unlikely to be truly independent and that they can be time consuming or computer-intensive. Advantages of indirect methods include their capacity to offer a prompt assessment of vital statistics completeness and to indicate whether a data quality problem exists, however, they rely on assumptions that may not hold and they are heavily dependent on the quality of census data.

59. Implementing direct or indirectmethods will depend on the needs of the analyst and the resources available. In some cases, a blend of direct and indirect methods might be appropriate. Some factors to take into account when deciding which type of method to use are the objectives of the study, the degree of precision needed in the estimates, the time frame for obtaining results, the type of event to be studied and the resources available.

60. Participants echoed the importance of improving quality of data and suggested a range of strategies that countries have implemented or are planning to implement. In Namibia, a quality assessment framework has been developed and an assessment exercise will be conducted soon. They also proposed to make compulsory a practice when

Ministry of Health forward notifications of birth, in order to monitor completeness. In Lesotho, a quality assurance programme was implemented for integrity of records, focusing on avoiding empty items within records, i.e. content error.

61. A representative of UNECA highlighted that it is crucial to train local registrars on the importance of the data that they are collecting. A question was raised as to what are the education qualifications that a registrar should meet. Botswana offered a success story in this respect; a customized syllabus was developed jointly by the University of Botswana and the Department of Civil and National Registration of a certificate for new and old civil registration staff. In addition, a representative of UNSD recommended to require highschool plus two or three years of college education, and shared the experience of several Eruopean countries, where there is a specific accreditation to become a civil registrar.

62. The participants also discussed their need for guidance on measuring completeness of their civil registration and vital statistics systems. They were particularly interested in knowing how to derive the adequate denominator to compute a completeness estimate. A question was asked on how to use a population census to evaluate the quality of vital statistics obtained from civil registration. Referring to the session's presentation delivered by UNSD, an example was provided– the number of children born in the last 12 months collected in a population census can and should be compared to the live births registration in the last 12 months prior to the census whenever available. There was a general request from delegations to obtain technical assistance from both UNSD and UNECA so as to be accompanied in the conduction of quality assessment exercises.

63. Another topic that caught the attention of delegations was the matter of unlawful polygamy and how to avoid it. Botswana explained that in their case, prior to their first marriage, each person chooses whether to abide by the common law or by the customary law. The database and electronic system allow for both cases; if a person registers as abiding the common law, the system will not allow for multiple marriages, but if the person is registered as abiding by the customary law, then it will. Lesotho acknowledged that they trust the new automated electronic system to help in avoiding this type of unlawful marriages.

Session 7. Population registers, population censuses and surveys as a source of vital statistics

64. A representative of UNSD presented the nature, use, advantages and limitations of population registers, censuses and surveys in the production of vital statistics. The population register was defined as a mechanism of continuous recording and 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. It was highlighted that the primary function of a population register is not statistical, but administrative.

65. The presentation included a diagram outlining the structure and interdependencies of the components a civil registration and vital statistical system, where it was showed how population registers censuses and surveys fit in such a system.

66. Some of the issues facing the implementation of population registered were elaborated upon. For example the determination of what population will be covered by the register, and the particularities of usual resident population, citizens temporarily abroad, non-citizens temporarily in the country, and diplomats, as well as the question of legal status of certain segments of the population. The recommended content of a population register was also presented.

67. In addition, the links between civil registration and population registers were clarified, explaining the different institutional arrangements that these components can have at the national level. Civil registration and population registers can both belong to the same agency, but they can also be run by separate agencies. Irrespective of this, if a government decides to have a national population register, making the civil registration system a vital component that feeds information into a computerized population register will generate relevant, accurate, timely and comprehensive vital statistics.

68. While here is no substitute for a functioning civil registration system as a source of vital statistics, there are complimentary sources such as population censuses and surveys. In a number of countries, these sources are still used as primary source of vital statistics because of the lack of reliable data from civil registration.

69. Treated as complimentary sources, censuses and surveys are useful because they provide independent estimates of demographic parameters; they are needed to obtain denominators for rates; and they are tools when evaluating the level of completeness of civil registration. Surveys are particularly valuable for in-depth investigation of health, social, living and economic characteristics.

70. Regardless of whether censuses and surveys are treated as complimentary or main source of vital statistics, it is absolutely necessary that they be components of the national statistical system as a whole; that all sources exhibit harmonization of concepts, methodology, definitions and classifications; and that all undergo quality assessment exercises.

71. The presentation highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of each source. The population register, as a source of vital statistics, enables the production of small area statistics and historical statistics, thus giving way to longitudinal studies. In addition, it makes it possible to compile vital statistics in a timely manner. Censuses have their advantages and disadvantages when used for fertility and mortality statistics. A well-documented advantage refers to the fact that they provide statistics for small areas, they are self-sufficient for the calculation of rates and they are universal. On the other hand, they are undoubtedly the most expensive statistical exercises and too far apart in time. When analyzing in depth the appropriateness of the census for fertility and mortality statistics it is recognized that the processing of results is slow and expensive and that there is a danger that data become obsolete by the time they are published. Another

consideration when using censuses refers to the framing of census questions relating to fertility and mortality, as they pertain not to the census date itself, but to a period of time preceding the census (for example, the number of children born to the woman in the 12 months prior to the census date). As far as sample surveys are concerned, their quality is often affected by sampling and non-sampling errors and they are not suitable for small area statistics. On the other hand, they provide a much broader range of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, as they allow for detailed questioning.

72. There was a discussion regarding experiences in launching and managing population registers in countries outside the European Union, particularly in Africa. Namibia and Lesotho shared the legal settings of their particular situation, as well as the prominent challenges in the process of establishing and maintaining their population register. For example, Namibia held extensive initial discussions as to which population would be included in the register.

73. Clarification was asked to how far back data must be collected when constructing a population register for the first time. It was noted that children ever born to a woman, among other information posed a particular challenge as it can carry recall bias, which would affect directly the accuracy of the data. Related to this question, is the issue of capturing births that occurred outside of the country, but have residence in the country.

74. UNSD acknowledged that constructing birth histories will be cumbersome and prone to inaccuracies. In addition, the farther back in time the data refer to, the more prone to errors they would be. Thus, the length of the time interval in order to collect data from the past is a matter to be decided by each country, keeping in mind that it is practically impossible to check data far behind in time or events occurring outside the country.

75. Participants expressed some confusion in regards to the defining differences between civil registration and a population register and their common elements. In some countries, particularly Namibia, the legal term used is "population registration" which creates misunderstandings in terms of content and purpose. A representative of UNSD clarified that civil registration is essentially process, while a population register is a repository of data. In fact, it can be a system of repositories, having population as the master data base, and satellite data bases, such as employment, businesses, etc. that are linked through an id number or key. The determination of which population is included and which topics are collected depends on the countries' priorities that must be discussed a length before embarking in such a project.

76. Delegations expressed deep concerns in terms of protecting data confidentiality vis-à-vis the available technology nowadays. Technological advancements can bypass the laws in place. In addition, agencies receive ever more often requests from researchers for datasets, which leads to issues of confidentiality at the household level. To respond to this challenge, new regulations for data sharing are being developed and implemented in a number of countries, such as Kenya.

77. A representative of UNSD highlighted the critical role that a sound legal basis plays in the context of population registers. All responsibilities and rights to access to data need

to be mandated by law. He went on to share the practice in some developed regions including Scandinavia, where access is given to researches only on government premises to work with household level or individual level data, analyze them and make tabulations, but no opportunity to take away any disaggregated data is permitted.

78. A representative of UNECA added that, in order to protect confidentiality, including addresses in population registers is not needed, locality is enough. Having address together with the rest of the population register information may result too dangerous for confidentiality. If it is decided that collecting addresses is high in the country's priority list, there can be a separate database of addresses that only a handful of people can access and link to the population register.

79. Touching upon institutional arrangements, participants shared their national situation and difficulties. In Nigeria and Uganda, for example, the population register is independent of the civil registration system. In the former, the main purpose of the population register is identity administration and excludes children. In the latter, the population register is mainly meant for keeping count of refugees and internally displaced persons, but the accuracy of place of birth and age is not good. In general, there was agreement on the need for a legal framework that covers the details of communication and data transfer between agencies. Botswana shared that there are three separate relevant databases in the country: civil registration, identity and migration; each one belongs to a different government Ministry. Currently, they are implementing a re-engineering project to link the different Ministries and their data.

80. UNSD explained that coordination must work at the lowest possible level, where civil registration feeds the population register by transferring filled forms. Coordination is necessary, irrespective of the organization of the system. Whether civil registration is centralized or decentralized and whether civil registration and population register are in the same or different agencies, the need for coordination of the system is of paramount importance.

81. Further, a representative of UNSD highlighted that there needs to be a clear distinction between identity management, which is meant for population control and governance, and civil registration, whose main objective is to produce legal documents. Caution was recommended, as putting these two systems together as one might undermine the quality of both. UNECA added that population registers and identity management systems needs to be separate but linked and interoperable with civil registration.

82. A question was raised related to the level of civil registration completeness recommended as a start point to establish a population register. UNSD made clear that while there is no recommendation regarding what completeness in civil registration is acceptable to start a population register, definitely it is not wise to attempt it if coverage is low. If a country has a deficient coverage, it should not be focusing on launching a population register.

Session 8. The role of health institutions

83. This session contained two presentations, one by UNSD focusing on the role of health institutions, and one by UNECA dealing with cause of death. The first presentation emphasized that this topic was added as a stand-alone chapter to the Principles and Recommendation for a Vital Statistics System in its third revision, given the prominent part that the health sector plays in the occurrence and notification of the most important vital events, i.e. births and deaths, and in the certification of cause of death. In addition to these functions carried out within the framework of the vital statistics system, information collected by health institutions is crucial in generating health statistics which, in turn, provide irreplaceable information regarding the overall health of the population, and the functioning and the needs of the public-health system.

84. The Civil Registration Law often designates the head of the health institutions as responsible for acting as informant of births, foetal deaths and deaths occurring in their institutions. In practice, this results in having a secondary civil registration office located in the health institutions, making the information of occurrence fast-flowing. Population (parents and relatives) are pointed to the registrar's office within the health institutions where the registration of the event takes place and certificates are issued.

85. In cases where the registrar's office is elsewhere and individuals are not able to register the event within health sector premises, the health institution provides a document certifying the occurrence of the event which is then used by the registrar.

86. The presentation highlighted that health institutions are not civil registration entities, as they do not have the authority to issue certificates. Only civil registrars have the authority for legitimate registration. Health institutions must not be distracted from their primary function, which is to provide health services. Often, however, health institutions are tasked to submit statistical reports on vital events; this means that they became producers of vital statistics, too. To illustrate these linkages, the presentation included a diagram outlining the structure and interdependencies of the components a civil registration and vital statistical system, where it was showed how health institutions fit in such a system.

87. Equally important from the public health aspect is the cause of death. This information must be included as part of the record by the registrar and submitted for statistical processing. The presentation also mentioned the WHO standards for the deriving and collecting cause of death.

88. The second part of session consisted in a presentation delivered by a representative of UNECA that talked about strengthening cause-of-death information through the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System (APAI-CRVS). The presentation provided guidance on why cause -of-death matters, it analysed the state of cause of death information in Africa, pondered the challenges in the collection of the information in Africa, proposed strategies for improvement and showed the regional resources available for improving the information.

89. The presentation emphasized that reliable knowledge on mortality and cause-of-death of a population is critical for policy making and planning. Furthermore, mortality and cause of death data are the foundation for health planning, monitoring and evaluation, including the millennium development goals (MDGs) and the national health plans. The presenter pointed out that in Asia and Africa, where the largest number of deaths occurs; capturing cause-of-death information remains a big challenge. A map on the quality of causes of death was displayed, demonstrating that, except for a handful of countries (South Africa, Egypt, Mauritius and Seychelles); the vast majority of countries do not report cause of death data to the WHO at all.

90. Only a minority of deaths in Africa occur in medical institutions where there is a physician able to issue a medical certificate including cause of death. In addition, verbal autopsy is not an established practice for the derivation of cause of death for non-institutional deaths. Some common challenges in collecting cause of death in health facilities were discussed. For instance, the law often does not make it mandatory for the medical institutions to record cause of death, or does not recognize the use of WHO's conventional standard in assigning cause of death. On the practices side, information on cause of death is not completed using International Form of the Medical Certificate of cause of death and there is no clear business process for flow and compilation of data, which results in poor quality of cause of death assignment by medical doctors. The challenges in collecting cause of death for events occurring outside health facilities were also presented. Firstly, deaths are rarely registered and when they are, no systematic process is in place for recording and compiling cause of death outside health facilities. Secondly, the use of verbal autopsy in collecting cause of death has been limited to a few experimental areas or through special surveys in selected countries.

91. A few strategies for improving cause of death information for both institutional and non-institutional deaths were proposed. In the case of deaths occurring in a health facility, these strategies included constituting a core team to implement and plan actions for improvement of cause of death information; reviewing current death certificates and modifying them to ensure alignment with international standards; developing an action plan for training the physicians in medical certification; and collaborate with universities and medical training institutions to incorporate ICD in medical curricula. In the case of deaths occurring outside a health facility, the proposed strategies included implementing verbal autopsy with recommend WHO standards, forms and tools; testing the tools and process (from collection to compilation) through pilot studies; re-designing the business process based on the results of the pilot; conducting regular training of lay interviewers in verbal autopsy processes.

92. The representative of UNECA went on to present the assessment tool on cause of death, developed to help countries understand their systems –what works and what doesn't work and to develop country specific strategies for improvement. At the end of the presentation, some of the immediate next steps of UNECA in terms of its work on cause of death were unveiled. First, it will develop a clear set of strategies in improvement of causes of death collection and compilation. Both institutional and non-institutional deaths will be taken into account, with non-institutional deaths focusing on operational research on verbal autopsy to test the full process. Second, UNECA plans to

develop a regional pool of experts on death registration and causes of death including verbal autopsy, who can be assigned to advise countries on demand.

93. There was a discussion regarding the integration of civil registration, statistics and health systems and the harmonization of data emanating from each of them. It was recognized by participants that it is a challenge to have up to date and consistent information. This is related to the weakness of the technological infrastructure found in the health sector in general and in rural areas in particular, thus, information takes a long time to reach civil registration, resulting in issues of timeliness. Some examples of efforts to capture data from burials and hospitals were mentioned. However, delegations noted that the lack of adequate technological tools and infrastructure not only affects the production of vital statistics, but also the registration of cause of cause of death.

94. A representative of UNICEF pointed out that integration of health sector must be strengthened in all arenas, including in the formulation of laws and policies. Moreover, a representative of UNSD indicated that having a common or interlinked electronic system for health and civil registration is a very useful approach. A representative of UNECA alluded to the importance of clarity in terms of the business process for cause of death information in the context of civil registration and vital statistics. The information flow from the hospital or health sector or police to the Civil Registrar to the National Statistics Office must be clearly defined, as well as the role of every stakeholder.

95. Coordination activities exist in three aspects. First, there should be a uniform legislation and regulation nationwide and procedures for each registration function need to be clearly stated in manuals and disseminated at each level of stakeholder organizations. Second, it is helpful to create an inter-agency coordinating committee, consisting of all reporting sources such as hospitals, private doctors, court houses, and funeral directors, to monitor and evaluate the completeness and reliability of the registration procedure. Working closely with the Ministry of Health, for example, is crucial for accurate coding of cause of deaths. Another committee could be formed involving users and potential users of the civil registration records so that the demand for civil registration is strengthened. The third aspect is to maintain regular communications within the system, through periodic meetings, electronic dialogues and site visits. The importance of coordination mechanisms at subnational levels was also emphasized in the discussion. The by representative from UNSD suggested having a regional professional association on civil registration and vital statistics,. The association would be very important for experience sharing and communicating on relevant issues among countries in the region.

96. It was recognized by participants that the training of both medical professionals and statisticians was very important in obtaining accurate information on cause-of-death statistics.

97. Some delegations asked for advice on whether to show cause of death in death certificates, particularly in cases where the cause is sensitive, such as HIV/AIDS. South Africa shared its practice; information on cause of death is provided only for statistical purposes and it is not included in death certificates. UNSD agreed with this practice and

highlighted that death certificates should only show basic information on the event and the deceased, excluding cause of death.

98. A lengthy discussion on privacy, confidentiality and access to cause of death information unchained. South Africa reiterated that only certain experts are designated to have access to sensitive information, and that the role of the registrar is limited to register the event and accompanying topics, not to have access to the cause of death certified by the health sector. Defining the roles and prerogatives of registrars comes back to issue discussed in session 6, namely the education qualifications needed to be appointed registrar.

99. In Egypt, information on cause of death is not accessible to registrars and is not shown in death certificates, only in burial permits, which are issued by physicians. On the other hand, death certificates in Uganda and Nigeria contain cause of death; this information is readily available to registrars and is not confidential. Lesotho proposed formulating a model for certifying and registering cause of death that is relevant to African circumstances; this model needs to treat certification, coding and registration as integral components of the civil registration and vital statistics system. It is crucial to agree on whose is the responsibility of coding cause of death in order to adequately register it. In the case of deaths occurring in health facilities, health practitioners and registrars can agree on the cause of death to be recorded in the system, without showing it in the death certificate.

100. In this respect, Namibia shared that their civil registration law was revised the previous year, among other purposes, to fully take into account the issue of confidentiality and access rights. In the past, death certificates used to show cause of death. Because of this, relatives of the deceased used to declare the death with a cause of death other than HIV/AIDS, even if it was the case, in order to be able to receive insurance payments. This practice undermined substantially the quality of cause of death information in the civil registration data base. With the revised law, the health sector issues a medical certificate showing the cause of death, which families can use and share as needed. This medical certificate feeds information to civil registration. However, the official death certificate issued by the Civil Registrar does not display cause of death and civil registration authorities are legally bound not to share information on cause of death. Actually the data base has restricted access to cause of death so that most civil registration employees cannot retrieve it.

101. A representative of UNSD emphasized that the recommendations on access to cause of death are strict. Registrars should not be able to retrieve this information. Trained health workers have the responsibility to certify the cause of death and then seal that part of the record, so that it used for statistical purposes. Individual level data must be protected. The particularity of cause of death from the view of civil registration is that it is a variable that, unlike the rest, originates outside civil registration, within another institution. Although this poses theoretical and operational challenges, the role of the Civil Registrar is of a custodian. It needs to ensure that information on cause of death is part of the civil registration record and that it is properly transferred to the National Statistics Office. If allowed by the national law, insurance companies could gain

information on cause of death via close relatives of the deceased or verifying with the relevant hospital, not the Civil Registrar. In this context, UNSD praised the example of Namibia as to how this issue was developed in the revised legislation.

102.   To add to the substance of this discussion, participants mentioned that confidentiality of cause of death is not only related to registrars and insurance companies, but to other entities, such as non-governmental organizations. Often, they make requests to have access to data on cause of death. Again, a representative of UNSD reiterated that Civil Registrars have the responsibility to register cause of death information, attach it to the relevant record and transfer it to the National Statistics Office. The Principles and Recommendations state that information on cause of death can only be released to close relatives of the deceased. Recognizing that there exist different country practices and that national laws may allow registrars or other persons to have access to cause of death information, UNSD warned of the dangers this arrangement my carry, as sensitive information can leak.

103.   Another matter that came up during the discussion was the fact that, in Africa, a large percentage of deaths occurs outside health facilities, particularly in rural areas. This represents a considerable complication not only for registering the occurrence of the event, but also for certifying cause of death. First, as deaths are not notified, official records will show that the person is alive for an extended period of time after the actual death. In this context, the involvement of headmen in the registration process can help with the registration rate. Second, there are not enough health practitioners to cover all the territory and, depending on traditions, families may wish to bury their deceased promptly, thus, neither autopsy is performed, nor cause of death is captured. Participants wondered what the role of health institutions could be regarding this issue, and whether other persons, apart from health professionals, should certify cause of death for deaths occurring outside health facilities. UNSD recommended having some kind of health office in the majority of rural areas, even a very basic dispensary staffed with at least one health worker, so deaths that occur outside health facilities are timely reported by the community to the local health office and the health worker can visit the place of occurrence to certify the cause of death. If this is not possible, then the recommendation is to perform verbal autopsies to derive cause of death, according to the WHO international standards.

104.   A representative of UNECA offered the example of Egypt, where traditions dictate that bodies need to be disposed quickly, however cause of death is almost universally collected. This is thanks to investments that the health system has done to provide population with health services at low geographical levels and to the need of a burial permit, issued by a physician that certified cause of death. Egypt agreed with UNECA's view and highlighted the importance of investing in civil registration and vital statistics.

105.   Finally, participants commented on the possible need to have an addendum to the global Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System that reflects the specificities of the African situation. UNSD and UNECA indicated that countries will be

able to discuss this need at the highest level at the upcoming 3rd Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration.

Session 9. Civil registration as a source of vital statistics

106.   A representative of UNSD made a presentation on the basic characteristics of the civil registration method. The four basic characteristics of a civil registration – that it is universal, continuous, permanent and compulsory were elaborated. Registration of a vital event needs to be compulsory by law, hence the importance of the legal framework that spells out the consequences for not complying with the law, yet, it is always better to relay on incentives rather than penalties. The principle of universality refers to civil registration applying to the whole territory, to all the population and to all citizens abroad. In order for civil registration to be continuous and permanent, the existence of a civil service agency is critical; civil registration has to be operated by a state-run public institution. An additional principle is confidentiality, which translates into integrity of individual information and its protection from misuse and is limited only by the need to certify individual information.

107.   The process of civil registration was defined as recording the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to a population, as provided through law, decree or regulation. The presentation included a diagram outlining the structure and interdependencies of the components a civil registration and vital statistical system, including the principles of civil registration.

108.   It was noted that the primary purpose of civil registration is establishing documents provided by law, while its secondary purpose is being the ideal source of vital statistics. The civil registration method and system were presented. The civil registration method refers to the procedure of gathering the basic information on the incidence and characteristics of vital events that occur in the population of the country. This forms the base for the preparation of vital records with legal value and the production of vital statistics. The civil registration system encompasses those institutional, legal and technical settings needed for the performance of civil registration functions in a technical, sound, coordinated and standardized manner. Civil registration system functions include recording vital events; storing, safe-keeping and retrieval of vital records; protection of confidentiality; certificate issuing and other customer services; recording and reporting information on vital events for statistical purposes; and providing reliable and timely information and data to other government agencies.

109.   The civil registration system has a legal and protective function. Its fundamental role is the provision of legal instruments to individuals, including the certification of facts relating to existence, identity, civil status and family status. The system establishes identity, parental relationship, inheritance and citizenship, and provides eligibility data for social benefits and age-related items, such as school entry, the right to work and driver's license, not to mention the right to vote. The presentation further outlined the importance of a properly functioning civil registration system and its impact on exercising basic human rights. A civil registration is needed to safeguard individual rights

at the most basic level, like the right of a newborn to being registered and having a name. In addition, the civil registration system carries a number of administrative advantages, such as access to services and benefits, and statistical advantages such as monitoring cause of death, maternal and child health care.

110. The vital events to be recorded by civil registration were reiterated according to the priority order mentioned in session four as follows: births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, annulments, judicial separations, adoptions, legitimations and recognitions. In addition, the representative of UNSD analyzed the components the legal framework of civil registration – proof of registration, statistical reports, inspection and penalties, and funding. The component of proof of registrations spells out the authorization of officials to issue documents certifying the facts of registration. The component dealing with statistical reports specifies the agency where statistical forms need to be sent, the deadlines for submitting statistical forms, and the ways for cooperation and division of labor among agencies. The component on inspection and penalties establishes oversight procedures, spells authority and defines penalties. The funding component designates source of funding and funding procedures.

111. In its concluding remarks, the presentation reiterated the importance of civil registration being an apparatus operated by the government, oriented to providing individual services, legal protection of human rights, proof of civil status, access to services and to producing vital statistics. Finally, the representative of UNSD reminded delegations that the civil registration method is related to the registration procedures and protocols, while the civil registration system refers to the entity in charge of implementing the method.

112. During the discussion, participants emphasized the definition and importance of timeliness, in terms of delayed and late registration, for complying with the four basic characteristics of civil registration. In this respect, a question was raised as to whether it is appropriate that local registrar publish reports in order to be timelier. UNSD recognized that timeliness is important, however he clarified that it does not carry the same weight as other principles, such as universality. He went on to explain that it is recommended that only National Statistics Offices publish reports. This stems from the fact the records submitted from local registrars to higher level offices, and eventually to the National Statistics Office, are subject to quality checking and possible editing. If final published figures do not match with those published by local registrars, credibility can be damaged.

113. There was also some confusion among delegations as to what exactly is the role of the National Statistics Office. A representative of UNSD replied that the Civil Registrar does not have to produce statistical reports, but to fill in statistical forms and transfer them to the National Statistics Office. Registrars can produce them as a tool for monitoring their work, but the responsibility of producing vital statistics lies on the National Statistics Office. There are countries where the responsibility is of the Civil Registrar, but those are exceptions. The Principles and Recommendations describe clearly the relations, roles and responsibilities of the National Statistical Office within civil registration and vital statistics.

114.   Regarding the civil registration function of storage and safe-keeping of vital records, South Africa shared its national setting; in this country, legislation does not allow to destroy files dating back to 1800s. In other countries, such as Zimbabwe, storage and safekeeping protocols are needed. UNSD stated that safekeeping is responsibility of Civil Registrar. Taking advantage of the technology at hand, they can fulfill this responsibility by digitizing and cataloguing historical records. Further, he mentioned the Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System: Policies and Protocols for the Release and Archiving of Individual Records as a helpful reference text.

115.   Participants also discussed the issues faced in the framework of marriage and divorce registration. For instance, in a number of countries, most marriages take place in traditional settings and are never registered. Moreover, polygamy is legally or socially accepted in several countries in the region. In Uganda, polygamous marriages are handled as separate cases, couple by couple, regardless of whether a man appears as the groom more than once. A representative of UNSD acknowledged that this is particularly relevant to the region and said that the Principles and Recommendations do not address polygamous marriages and how to operationally resolve duplication. These are issues that each country has to tackle. Experiences show that publicity campaigns are very successful in improving registration of marriages. A representative of UNECA pointed out that, from the stand point of producing statistics there is no problem, as the approach is to follow the same practice as Uganda. However, from the civil registration point of view, there may be legal issues to be solved that depend on national legislation.

Session 10. National-level designation of responsibilities and organizational structures of a civil registration system

116.   This session comprised an introductory theoretical presentation by a representative of UNSD followed by four country representatives who talked about their civil registration operational arrangement at the national-level.

117.   UNSD elaborated on two components of civil registration, namely the legal framework and the organizational structures. National legal frameworks are made up in the first place by the Constitution, which is the highest law of the land. Being generic in character, Constitutions spell out major concepts such as individual rights and citizenship, among others. In second place, the Laws, derived from the Constitution, give substantive as well as procedural provisions. Some laws are more substantive than others, such as the Family Law and the Criminal Law, while others are more procedural, like the Law on Criminal Justice Procedure and the Civil Registration Law. The third echelon of a national legal framework is the Regulations, which in turn are derived from laws. Regulations outline procedural provisions and are easier to enact.

118.   The principles of the civil registration legal framework – legality, protecting interest of individuals, official status, compulsoriness, simplification and gratuity – were described and analised. The principle of legality means that the civil registration is supposed to reflect reality, i.e. the events that occurred, once registered, become legally valid. Protecting the interest of the individual translates into providing ready access to the

service, full information on procedure and outcomes, ensuring confidentiality and privacy of individual information, as well as easy retrieval of information. The principle of official status states that the law must give the registration agency the power and authority to promote registration; update or correct entries in the register; and ensure the integrity of the civil registration system. Compulsoriness of registration refers to the fact that the law has to spell out the obligation to register; and that entries in the civil registration constitute the only official and legal proof of civil status. Moreover, the registration agency must provide the population with frees services and should strive to achieve simplicity in the registration procedures.

119.   The components of the legal framework were also examined. The civil registration law needs to set the general provisions, starting with the definition of those vital events to be registered, the compulsoriness of registration, collection of statistical items, confidentiality, privacy, access and safekeeping, storage and preservation of records. The civil registration infrastructure must also be captured in the legal framework; the agency in charge of registration must be designated, along with its chief registrar, local registrars, registration units, notifiers, and informants, including authority and responsibilities for each of them. The civil registration law states the sphere of competence of the civil register, in terms of its responsibility for completeness and designation of place of registration. Furthermore, the law sets out what is the content of the register and establishes deadlines for making entries in the register. The legislation indicates specific procedures for registering each type of event and designates informants for each type of event, too. Incentives for registration; sanctions for non-compliance; authorization and procedures for amending records; as well as authorization to officials to issue documents certifying the facts of registration are also spelled out in the legal framework. The statistical role of the Civil Registrar is likewise contemplated in the law; it specifies the agency where statistical forms need to be sent, the deadlines for submitting statistical forms and the mechanisms for cooperation and division of labor. Legislation should include designation of oversight authority, procedures and penalties, as well as sources of funding and funding procedures.

120.   The terms of the administrative and organizational structures of civil registration should be stated in the relevant law. Depending on the judicial, political and administrative circumstances, as well as history and tradition the legislation assigns the authority for registration of vital events to a newly formed or an existing institution and establishes the system as centralized or decentralized.

121.   A centralized system is characterized by a central agency responsible for civil registration with national standards and uniform registration procedures. The central agency administers and manages the system nation-wide, conducting supervision and evaluation of local registration offices. It is also responsible for coordination with other agencies, such as statistics and health. Advantages of centralized systems include having in place a standard legal frame for the registration system, promoted by uniform legislation; it also facilitates interpretation and enforcement of norms and regulations and allows for uniform procedures for recording, including certification and release of records. Centralized structures enable maintenance and control over the entire system, facilitate nation-wide research, and make the introduction of new standards and technologies easier.

In addition, training of registrars is simple if there is a single central agency responsible for civil registration.

122.   In a decentralized system, civil registration can be administered at the level of major civil division. However, there still exists the need for an agency at the national level to harmonize methodologies, procedures, definitions and classifications, and to act as the clearinghouse. This arrangement is common in countries with federal political system.

123.   The introductory presentation concluding by remarking that irrespective of the organizational paradigm – centralized or decentralized – the registration takes place at the local level. Consequently, the structure of the civil registration units is the building block of the system, and so is the role of local registrars. The representative of UNSD emphasized the importance of an inter-agency coordination body built into both the civil registration and the vital statistics systems in order to run a smooth and efficient operation.

124.   The first country to present on national-level designation of responsibilities and organizational structures was Ethiopia, followed by Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland.

Ethiopia

125.   The representative of Ethiopia elaborated on the responsibilities and organizational structure of the Ethiopian Vital Events Registration Agency. The civil registration system has been included in Civil code of 1960, however the civil registration law has not been enforced due to many reasons. The code itself states that registration of civil status shall not come into force until a day to be notified by Order published in the Negarit Gazetta. To these days, the Order has not been published. Thus, issuing of birth, marriage and death certificates as evidence of vital events has been fragmented and has been carried out in a non-standardized system, only in large municipalities.

126.   After the first ministerial conference the government gave due attention for enacting the legal framework, issuing a proclamation to ratify the Registration of Vital Events and National Identity Card. The purpose of this proclamation is to establish a system of registration of vital events that is accessible, comprehensive and compulsory. This system plays a key role in planning political, social and economic development, in providing different social and economic services to citizens, and in making the justice administration expedient. The proclamation also states that an appropriate federal organ shall be established by the regulation of the Council of Ministers to direct, coordinate and support the registration of vital events at national level and to centrally organize and keep records of vital events. It also urges an appropriate regional organ to be established or designated by each region to direct, coordinate and support the registration of vital events at regional level and to transfer records of vital events to the appropriate federal organ. Ethiopian Embassies and Consulates are designated registrars of vital events with regard to Ethiopians residing out of the country; national ships register events occurring onboard and the Ministry of National Defense has been entrusted with responsibility to register relevant vital events of the members of the defense.

127.   The proclamation establishes the role of officers of civil status and the types of register of civil status; makes provisions for copies and certificates of registration of vital events, for preparation and distribution of the registers, and for safeguarding the register. It spells out the procedures for registration of vital events, correction of records and the period of registration.

128.   Apart from the proclamation, the Government has issued the Regulation on the Establishment of the Vital Events Registration Agency. According to the regulation, the objectives of agency are directing, coordinating and supporting the registration of vital events at national level and centrally organizing and keeping records of vital events. The powers and duties of the agency include ensure the proper registration of vital events and the issuance of certificates, providing assistance to regional organs, conducting awareness creation, education and training, conducting surveys on quality and coverage of vital events registration, facilitating the application of information technology to vital events registration, undertaking the coordination of activities necessary for timely transmission of collected information, and forwarding policy ideas on vital events registration. The Vital Events Registration Agency, accountable to Ministry of Justice, is part of the vital events council, which is composed by federal and regional government offices with a view of initiating policy ideas, reviewing the country's vital events registration action plans, reviewing the performance reports of the agency, and reviewing the nation-wide implementation. Additionally, a board of management oversees the activities of the agency, reviews the annual work plan, approves guidelines to be issued by the agency, deliberates and decides on issues related to implementation, and coordinates relevant organs. In both the vital events council and the board of management, the Minister of Justice is the chairperson and the Director General of the Agency is the secretary.

129.   Ethiopia has nine regional states and two city administrations. To this date, except two regions and one city administration, all regional states and city administrations have enacted the regulation of vital events registration.

130.   The presentation included a diagram showing the organizational structure of the federal and regional vital events registration agencies, from the highest level organs down to local offices, at kebele level, the lowest administrative level in Ethiopia. A data flow chart was also furnished, showing the proposed work flow of birth registration from kebele to federal level.

131.   The representative of Ethiopia introduced the audience to some of the achievements made so far, both the federal and regional levels. At the federal level, the agency has developed a seven-year national strategy and action plan (2013-2020), including estimated costs and has designed the business process engineering. Currently, the agency is hiring and placing workers, capacitating the human power, providing support to regions, and is carrying out preparation work. At the regional level, according to their respective regulation, many regional agencies have assigned their director general, have established regional councils of vital events and boards of management, have arranged organizational structure up to wereda (District) level. At present, a number of regional agencies have allocated or are allocating budget, and are hiring and placing workers.

132. The Ethiopian presentation concluded with an overview of the agency's future engagements. These include continuous support to the regions, and coordination of lower-level registration institutions, preparation to start actual registration, lobbying the concerned officials to give proper attention, ongoing training and awareness creation, capacity building for civil status officers, and development of directives and implementation manuals and guidelines.

Lesotho

133. The representative of Lesotho elaborated on the responsibilities and organizational structures of the National Identity and Civil Registry. He expressed that the importance of civil registration and vital statistics system in Lesotho had been greatly undermined and its administration was very fragmented. The statistics from the few registered vital events were rarely compiled. The system was given poor political recognition though it had been acknowledged as an essential tool for development. It was after the African Ministers' conferences held in Addis Ababa and Durban that measures were taken to comply with the Resolution adopted thereof to reform the CRVS systems in African countries. To this effect, administration and coordination of the civil registration system is currently put under the Ministry of Home Affairs, department of National Identity and Civil Registry. The mandate of the Registry is the establishment and maintenance of a national identity register, the assignment of unique identity numbers and the issuance of national identity cards. To meet its mandate, registration of vital events is critical.

134. The registry is governed by; inter alia, the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, the Marriage Act, the Laws of Lerotholi (Codified Rules of Custom), the National Identity Cards Act, and the legislation on citizenship.

135. The presentation included a diagram showing the institutional arrangement and structure, where the duties of the Registrar General were specified, as well as those of other types of officers, such as the civil registration assistant, the identity enrolment officers and the production manager, among others. Another diagram showed the key stakeholders of the Registry, for instance, the Bureau of Statistics, the Credit Bureau, law enforcement agencies, financial institutions and so forth.

136. A further resolution of the African Ministers' conferences was to reform the CRVS systems taking stock of the current status of the systems through comprehensive assessments and development of concrete strategies and time-bound action plans. Thus, plans are in place in Lesotho to conduct an assessment, followed by a strategic plan of action. According to the guidelines provided by regional core group to guide the assessment process, some activities have progressed, namely, establishment of a high level coordination committee, a lead agency, a technical coordination committee, the selection of a senior advisor and national consultant; budget has been secured and task teams have been constituted.

137. The representative of Lesotho walked the audience through the process of birth and death applications and urgent birth and death applications. Birth and death

certificates collection dates are processed depending on the urgency of the application. Applications submitted by elderly and disabled persons are considered urgent. The process starts with the compilation of an applicants list. Clients are served on a "first come first serve basis". The applications are then screened, i.e. documents are inspected and applicants are interviewed. Then a form is filled and supporting documents are attached to it, after which clients need to obtain a stamp from police and make the relevant payment. A supervisor verifies the data on the form and the supporting documents before endorsing and signing. The application form is retrieved and issued for authorization, and then the data processor checks compliance and processes the application form.

138.   Delegations also heard about the compilation of vital statistics from civil registration. In that regard, he noted that it is administered by the Bureau of Statistics in the Ministry of Development Planning. The production of vital statistics from civil registration is however hampered by the lack of good collaboration between the relevant stakeholders. There is currently no plan in action for the transmission of civil registration data to the Bureau of Statistics for compilation.

139.   The Lesotho presentation concluded with a reference to the planned assessment exercise, which will be be carried out following the guidelines tool, and with the assistance of the senior advisor and national consultant. The assessment report is to be disseminated and a strategic action plan will be developed and implemented, which is intended to improve the status of CRVS system in Lesotho.

Namibia

140.   The representative of Namibia presented the structure and mandate of the Namibian Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. The mandate encompasses the registration of birth and issuance of birth certificates, the registration of death and issuance of death certificates, the registration of marriages and divorces, the registration of identification and issuance of identifications, the amendment of records, the storage and retrieval of records, and the issuance of duplicate records. In turn, the issuance of divorce documents falls under the scope of the Ministry of Justice. The legal framework governing these mandates is the Births, Marriages and Deaths Registration Act and Identification Act, 1996.

141.   She showed several diagrams illustrating the structure and location of the civil registration offices, several registration processes conducted by the Ministry, the life cycle of civic events that make up the Namibian National Population Registration System and how individual records are related to each other. The National Population Registration System is designed to hold details on birth, marriage, divorce, death and other information in order to form an identity record for each individual. Each person's record is linked to those of their parents, children and spouse.

142.   The process of birth registration begins with the Ministry of Health and Social Services, who collects the child's birth details and mother' s first and surname, and files a notification of birth to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. There, the birth

record is created and data is captured in National Population Registration System in order to effectively register the birth and issue the birth certificate. The data is electronically stored and the application form is stored permanently in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration.

143.   The process for registration of natural deaths in Namibia also starts with the Ministry of Health and Social Services, who issues the medical certificate, including cause of death. The medical certificate is subsequently stamped by the relevant mortuary. The Ministry of Health and Social Services files a notification of death to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. There, the death record is created in the National Population Registration System and both death certificate and burial order are issued. Similarly to the case of birth registration, the death record is electronically stored and the application form, together with the medical certificate is stored permanently in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. All records older that five years are stored in an external archive.

144.   The process for registration of unnatural deaths in Namibia originates in the Namibian Police with the notice of death sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, stating that the cause of death is under investigation. There, the death is registered with no cause of death, enabling the issuance of the death certificate and burial order. These details are electronically stored and temporarily filed, pending the result of the cause of death investigation. Once a post mortem study has been carried out, the police submit a cause of death form to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration who enters the cause of death into the record. Finally, the application form and police report are stored.

145.   The process for marriage registration begins with the Magistrate officers and authorised pastors, who solemnize the marriage. Marriages are captured and stored in the National Population Registration System.

146.   The Namibian presentation concluded with an outline of their work in progress. They are currently conducting a comprehensive country assessment in order to come up with a strategy plan; and a coordination body is being formed, steered by Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. On the technology end, an interface is being designed to transmit raw data to Namibia Statistics Agency, and another interface is being developed in order to transfer birth and death notification details to the National Population Registration System from the Health Information System. Furthermore, web applications are being designed for death verification, using data items such as the initials and year of birth, date of death, place of death, initials of parents, and initials of children. They are also planning on delivering e-services via X-road (a standard tool which connects different decentralised systems). New birth and death certificates are being introduced and a project called "turnaround" is being launched. The aim of this project is to reduce turnaround times for processing key documents at head office such as identification documents, passports, and birth and death certificates. It is hoped that the project will help to eliminate backlogs at all processing steps for each service; provide required tools and processes to manage programmes; reduce average queue times; and develop processes and implementation plans.

Swaziland

147.   The representative of Swaziland outlined the legal framework for the civil registration, some technical aspects of the civil registration system, the organization of the civil registration system, the difficulties encountered and future plans.

148.   In legal terms, the registration of births, marriages and deaths in Swaziland started in 1927 and was mandatory for the European and coloured population only; in 1971 the registration was extended to the entire population. Although the 1971 extension was mandatory, it was neither implemented nor enforced. In 1983, the birth, marriages and deaths registration act was revised and replaced, and a new act was promulgated in 1984.

149.   This new act and it regulations provide legal basis and describe procedures for compulsory reporting and registration of live births, still births (foetal deaths), deaths, marriages contracted according to civil rights under the marriage act and marriages solemnized according to Swazi Law and Custom or any other customary law, such as Zulu law, Chinese law and Muslim law. The act is applicable to all persons residing temporarily or permanently in both urban and rural areas of Swaziland and to the citizens of Swaziland living abroad. More specifically, the act specifies definitions for live birth, marriage and still-birth. The act also covers how a registrar should be appointed, the informant for each event, requirements to change registration records, registration of illegitimate births, the duration between the date of occurrence and registration of the events (60-day period for the registration of live births and deaths and 7-day for the registration of still-birth), and the responsibility of registrars in the registration process. Special provisions are made on the registration of births and deaths occurred outside of the country. The act does not include other details of the registration procedure such as the information to be registered and the preparation of the statistical report.

150.   Regarding the registration of marriages, the act specifies the procedures to be followed with marriages taking place under the Swazi Law or other law and customs.

151.   The Swazi civil registration system is centralized and administered by the Registrar General, under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Civil registration in Swaziland is compulsory but it is not enforced. It is the duty of the Registrar General as well as other officers of the births, marriages and deaths section to co-ordinate unified supervision and to promote efficiency to the degree necessary to satisfy both legal and statistical needs in the country. The Registrar General and other office staff are appointed according to legislation. Officers are responsible for maintaining a central registry of all vital events and for administering uniform interpretation of laws and procedures. They are also required to stimulate improved registration of vital events by means of technical co-ordination, providing advice and assistance to the eight regional officers, fifty-five primary registration centers (called Tinkhundla centers) as well as the registration information centers, which are the lowest level units in the organizational hierarchy of registration. Registration of vital events starts at the registration information centers. Registration posts are also available in some hospitals and health centers and are strategically located around the entire country.

152.   The organizational structure is set as follows: one National Civil Registrar, one Deputy National Civil Registrar, two Assistant Civil Registrars, four Regional Civil Registrars, nine Assistant Regional Civil Registrars, nine Civil Registrars, and 25 Assistant Civil Registrars.

153.   The archives of all civil registration records are kept regionally and summarized regional records are transported to the Registrar General. Records are retrieved manually and through microcomputers. The system is currently running parallel, both manually and on computers. All registrations are hard covered for protection against sunlight.

154.   The representative of Swaziland walked the audience through the procedures to register births, deaths and marriages. For the registration of live births, parents or guardians need to complete the "Notice of Birth" at their respective districts. If the birth occurred at a hospital or a clinic, an immunization card is attached to the notice of birth. The two above documents are submitted to the Registrar of Birth at the local authority in the district where the child was born. The registrar enters the birth in the system and assigns a number as a means of reference. The form is endorsed with the registrar's signature and issued. If the birth occurred at home, an immunization card can be obtained from the nearest health center within one month of the child's birth.

155.   The registration of death, just as the birth registration, is completed at district level. If the death occurred in a hospital or a clinic, a medical practitioner needs to certify the medical form and state the cause of death on the form. If the death occurred outside the hospital, a police report or a letter from the chief or headman has to be attached for registration.

156.   For nationals living abroad, registration forms are available in all Trade Missions and Embassies. Completed forms are sent back to the country for further processing. After processing, the certificates are dispatched back to be issued to bearers or parents.

157.   The civil registration system in Swaziland is automated and vital statistics can be derived from the system. However, the main sources of vital statistics in the country are population censuses and sample surveys, ran by Central Statistics Office as the responsible agency.

158.   The representative of Swaziland closed her intervention by presenting the difficulties encountered in the civil registration and vital statistics system and the plans contemplated for improvement. There are two main issues. First, the civil registration coverage is low. There are a number of reasons for the low coverage: there is a lack of awareness of the public on the importance of civil registration; civil registration is not a priority for the government and therefore there is always a lack of financial and human resources for the Registrar General to operate effectively; and there is also a lack of manpower in the Central Statistics Office and demographic statistics do not always have priority in data collection and compilation. In addition, there is no coordination between the Registrar General and the Central Statistics Office. To improve the coverage and reporting of vital events, Swaziland plans to upgrade the Registrar General to a Departmental level agency so more governmental attention would be given to civil

registration activities; provide more registration sites and improve accessibility of civil registration offices to the public; link the system to the population registration system in the country; set up a unit of vital statistics within the Registration General to improve the compilation and reporting of vital statistics; and develop clearly defined linkages between the key players, i.e. Registrar General, Central Statistical Office and Ministry of Health.

159.   After hearing the theoretical presentation by UNSD and the four country interventions on civil registration operational arrangement at the national-level, and noting that sessions 11 and 12 were complimentary to session 10 thematic-wise, the workshop decided to postpone discussions until session 12. Thus, the discussions pertaining to sessions 10, 11 and 12 were held concurrently.

Session 11. Local - level designation of responsibilities of a civil registration system

160.   Similarly to session 10, this session comprised an introductory theoretical presentation by a representative of UNSD followed by four country representatives who talked about the responsibilities and functions of local registration offices.

161.   A local registrar was defined in UNSD's presentation as an official authorized by law to register the occurrence of vital events, represent the legal authority of the government and maintain a relationship with the community. It is necessary that the local registrar be employed full-time, enjoy civil service status and benefits and receive appropriate remuneration. A special consideration regarding local registrars is that they should enjoy recognition and standing in the communities they serve, they remain informed on the community's concerns and developments, and they establish a continuous relationship with personnel in hospitals, clinics, health centers, funeral institutions, religious establishments, court clerks, among others.

162.   The responsibilities of a local registrar are as follows: recording specific information regarding vital events; ensuring compliance with registration laws and regulations; ensuring the accuracy and completeness of each record; ensuring the confidentiality of each record; taking custody of the records; ensuring the completion of statistical reports; issuing certificates or copies of vital records; providing customer service; informing the public of the importance of civil registration and vital statistics; and explaining the registration process and its importance and consequence in a colloquial manner. In the case of death registration, local registrars also need to ensure that the certification of the cause of death is part of the documentation. They need to understand the process of producing vital statistics. Ideally, local registrars should display an active role within the community, and depending on the geographical features and size of the area covered, they should make regular rounds within the jurisdiction and have knowledge of local customs and languages. It is of utmost importance that local registrars maintain an easily accessible office and regular working hours.

163.   Within the provision of the law, the local registrar is subjected to penalties if he/she fails to register a vital event or its characteristics, as reported by the informant;

loses, damages or alters any registered records or permits such loss, damage or alteration to occur; fails to provide registrants with adequate protection of privacy and confidentiality; is found guilty of violating the provisions of the civil registration law or its rules and regulations; or if he/she fails to fill out and submit statistical documentation.

164.   The primary registration unit is a well-delineated part of territory of a country that is entrusted to a local civil registrar for the recording of vital events occurring therein. It is the jurisdictional territory of one registrar, and the boundaries should coincide with those of a minor civil division, making adjustments as needed. The physical office space of the unit and must be of adequate size, easily accessible and well-marked, and open during regular working hours. Therefore, determination on the number and location of local registration unit needs to take into account the population size; availability of staff and material resources; accessibility, including transportation facilities and climate; literacy of the population; and complexity of the registration procedure.

165.   Secondary registration units are located at selected locations that display frequent vital events within a primary registration unit, such as hospitals or health centers. Secondary registration units also need to have clear delineation of boundaries.

166.   In addition, mobile registration units can be used in areas where the population density is too low to establish a permanent unit, or they can visit areas that are not accessible year–round. They are motor vehicles of a variety of sorts as sizes visiting small villages or other kinds of human settlement. In any case, mobile registration units should have regular schedules that are publicized in advance, and they should stay in one place long enough to give population the opportunity to register their vital events.

167.   In his concluding remarks, the representative of UNSD highlighted that the local registrar is a building block of the whole system; he/she needs to be a civil servant, well versed in registration law and procedures, trained and equipped with high standards of responsibility, well versed in local circumstances, customs and language. Additionally, the presentation emphasized that local registration units must be easily recognizable and efficient.

168.   The first country to present on responsibilities of the local registrar was Ghana, followed by Uganda, Gambia and South Africa.

Ghana

169.   The representative of Ghana elaborated on the background and operational structure of the Ghanaian Births and Deaths Registry, its current programmes to achieve the mandate, the challenges faced and the way forward. The Births and Deaths Registration Act, passed in 1965, led to the establishment of the Births and Deaths Registry, placed under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. The mandate of the Registry is to manage and promote the vital registration system in the country; however, its functions do not include the registration of marriage, divorce, separations and adoption.

170.   The presentation included a diagram illustrating the organizational structure of the civil registration system, from the central registry office in Accra, down to the 410 community registration points. Registration is coordinated from the central registration office; the entire country has been divided into registration regions, which coincide with the political and administrative regions of the country. The registration regions have been subdivided into registration districts, which also coincide with the country's political administrative local authority areas. Below the district office is a network of registry offices and centres located within communities where registration takes place.

171.   The Births and Deaths Registry has currently a number of programmes in place to achieve its mandate. It is building partnerships with a range of stakeholders, such as the Ghana Statistical Service, Ghana Health Service, Passport Office, National Identification Authority, Ghana Education Service, faith based organisations, international organisations (UNICEF and UNFPA), and non-governmental organisations (PLAN). The Registry is also devoted to creating awareness among the population notably via radio and TV programmes, the institution of the annual birth and death registration celebration day, speaking interventions at community durbars (gatherings of community members with their leaders to celebrate an occasion or hold a general meeting), and mobile registration. The Registry conducts capacity building activities as well. For instance, the Community Population Register Programme, which is running in six communities across five regions, and training on the services delivered by community health nurses, community based volunteers and the child protection team as it relates to birth registration. In terms of computerization, the Registry's head office has installed a server, workstations and printers, so that the national database of registered births and deaths is established. This is being expanded to all regional offices, district offices and community registration centres, where phones or tablets are also being introduced for registration, with support from the telecommunication services provider.

172.   The representative of Ghana shared with the audience the evolution of birth and death registration rates. It was shown that, while birth registration has increased significantly in the last ten years, death registration has remained constant.

173.   At the end of his presentation, the representative of Ghana enumerated the best practices put in place by the Births and Deaths Registry. Firstly, registration is free for births for infants; this, together with the institution of the annual birth and death registration day celebrations has helped to drive awareness and importance of civil registration. Second, the collaboration with the Ghana Health Service through participation in the annual Child Health Promotion Week and Integrated Maternal and Child Health campaigns has also been useful to improve coverage of birth registration. Third, in order to cover more rural communities, collaboration activities are being carried out with Ghana Statistical Service and the Noguchi Memorial Institute of the University of Ghana to implement the Community Population Register Programme in about sixty-six rural communities. Fourth, the introduction of mobile registration services in hard-to-reach areas of the country has proven successful. Fifth, computers have been introduced to generate certificates, and a pilot of virtual private network (VPN) connection is being tested to link all regional centres to the national database. Finally, the introduction of the

use of text messages (SMS) is also being tested, as well as the use of toll free lines for notification, both to enhance birth and death registration.

Uganda

174.   The representative of Uganda gave an overview of legal regime governing the registration of births, deaths, marriages and adoptions, as well as the challenges faced by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau. Regarding the legal and institutional framework, the relevant laws mentioned during the presentation were the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Uganda Registration Services Bureau Act, the Children Act, the Local Governments Act, the Birth and Death Registration Act, and the Marriage Act.

175.   The presentation included a diagram illustrating how the Ministry of Finance (to which the Uganda Bureau of Statistics belongs), the Ministry of Justice (to which the Uganda Registration Services Bureau belongs), and the Ministry of Health interact. It also showed the civil registration structure from the Attorney General down to village notifiers and parishes. The Uganda Registration Services Bureau is an autonomous statutory body with the mandate to carry out all registrations required under the laws of Uganda. Registration of vital events is the mandate of the Directorate of Civil Registration. The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the 1997 Local Government Act as amended brought in decentralization. As such, activities in the birth and death registration follow a national harmonized model.

176.   There is a range of types of registration districts, namely hospitals (government, missionary and industrial), health centres, sub-counties, divisions, municipalities, the city of Kampala Authority, places of public worship licensed to celebrate marriages, temples, and mosques. The representative of Uganda elaborated on the roles and responsibilities at each organizational level of the Uganda Registration Services Bureau. At the highest level, the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs is responsible for policy formulation, whereas the Attorney General appoints registrars (of Births and Deaths and of Marriages) and designates registration districts.

177.   In turn, the Registrar General of Births and Deaths issues long birth and death certificates, receives returns from districts and hospitals, issues registration materials to all registration districts, certifies documents in his custody, and collects non tax revenue on behalf of the Government. In addition, the Registrar of Births and Deaths is mandated by the Children Act to maintain an adopted children's register where particulars of adoption orders are entered; therefore, he/she registers adoption orders and issues certificates of adoption. Chief administrative officers at district level are responsible for forwarding the returns to the Registrar General. At the lowest level, officers at sub-counties, the Kampala Capital City Authority, town councils, hospitals and health centres actually register births and deaths, and maintain records thereof, collect non tax revenue, and forward the returns to chief administrative officers for onward transmission to the Registrar General.

178.   According to the Marriage Act, there are several forms of marriages recognized in Uganda, specifically Christian church, civil (by the Registrar of Marriages), customary,

Hindu and Islamic. For this vital event, the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs grants licenses, dispensing, with given provisions of the law, to places of public worship to celebrate marriages; on the advice of the Registrar General, provides the fees for marriages under the various laws; and issues statutory instruments as provided for under the various laws. Again, the Attorney General appoints registrars (of Births and Deaths and of Marriages) and designates registration districts. In turn, the Registrar General of Marriages celebrates civil marriages, issues certificates thereof, is responsible for the repository of marriage registration data, collects of non tax revenue, searches, certifies and verifies documents and provide advisory services to government. Chief administrative officers at district level are responsible for celebrating civil marriages in the various districts, collecting non tax revenue, and forwarding marriage returns to the Registrar General. At the lowest organizational level, officers at sub-counties and towns register customary marriages, issue certificates of customary marriage registration, forward returns of customary marriages registered to the Registrar General and collect non tax revenue. Finally, clerics at churches, temples and mosques celebrate marriages in accordance with their respective rites and customs, and forward monthly returns to the Registrar General for custody.

179.   Divorces are handled by the Judiciary. There is no provision for registration of divorces, save for the Muslim Divorces which are registered by the Registrar General.

180.   The representative of Uganda presented some statistics and progress of the civil registration system achieved in the last couple of years. For instance, the number of births registered doubled from 2012 to 2013; hospital personnel was trained and equipped to use mobile registration; a number of counties, districts and divisions is conducting registration using mobile phones, and the service delivery was improved to two days to produce a long birth certificate from 18- 25 days. In addition, efforts have been made to link marriages and adoptions to birth and death registration using a unique identifier number. Furthermore, a country wide campaign for civil registration was carried out, where population could register births at hospitals, dedicated kiosks, by phone, local government facilities, children centres, schools, and universities.

181.   Regarding strategies for intervention, the representative of Uganda highlighted the civil registration and vital statistics countrywide assessment to establish baseline indicators on civil registration status in Uganda, which is in the final stages. She reported that a high number of civil registration officials are being trained and equipped, and that a mobile registration review is in the pipeline, as well as birth and death registration policy development. The Registration Services Bureau is conducting media awareness raising campaigns to influence positive thinking and attitudes towards civil registration; and is involving stakeholders for utilization of civil registration data, such as the National Social Security Fund, Social Protection and private banks. Both at the central and sub national level, they are supporting computerisation and automation of processes. One of the most immediate priorities is activating death registration and cause of death reporting, as well as legislative reform. Regarding the latter, the presenter mentioned the Registration of Persons' Bill, which is currently being considered by legislators. The bill seeks to establish the National Identification and Registration Authority, which once passed into law, will take over the functions of the Registrar of Births and Deaths. This implies that

civil registration will again be scattered as different institutions will have different functions in civil registration. There is also a Marriage and Divorce Bill before the legislative power which seeks to have all divorces registered by the Registrar of Marriages.

182.   At the end of her presentation, the representative of Uganda underlined the most prominent challenges ahead. Uganda Registration Services Bureau faces financial constraints and is working with archaic civil registration laws. This is compounded by the fact that there is absence of a birth and death registration policy, which has in turn hindered reform of the Birth and Death Registration Act. On the more operational side, there is lack of awareness both by the public and the various duty bearers, and civil registration coverage is limited.

Gambia

183.   The representative of Gambia gave a presentation of the designation and duties of the Registrar of Births and Deaths in the spheres of community activities, administration, and technical undertakings. Duties can be summarized as the management and administration of human, financial and material resources with the purpose of enforcing the Births and Deaths registration Act, including early and delayed registration as defined in the law. Human resources include the deputy registrars, registration officers and data entry clerks; and material resources are comprised by births and deaths registers, births and deaths certificates, red seals, embossing machines and stationaries. In terms of financial resources, the Registrar of Births and Deaths in Gambia has no fixed budgetary allocation. The Registrar budgets for each registration activity, sets the team involved, assigns roles and responsibilities, identifies and distributes materials and logistics, and coordinates and supervises mechanism of the activities.

184.   At the highest level, the Registrar of Births and Deaths carries out a range of activities in order to sensitize both service providers at local registration offices and public health centres, and communities. At the local level, these activities include radio campaigns for the general public, regular communications with local government authorities and the formation of village development committees. At the technical level, ongoing collaboration with governors, and the formation of technical advisory committees and multidisciplinary facilitation teams are part of the sensitization strategy. These committees and teams get together to identify problems, formulate activities and designate participants, partners and intervention areas. In particular, the technical committee meetings are discussing the most prominent issues currently at hand, for instance the National Identification Documents, the efforts to avoid child trafficking and trafficking in persons, and other child protections issues, such as orphans and other vulnerable children. The Registrar regularly communicates with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and other partners and stakeholders.

185.   In order to monitor and supervise registration processes, the Registrar, on a quarterly basis, visits the regional health directorates and basic health facilities; collects statistical data on births and deaths registered; discusses issues affecting registration; discusses management and administration guidance; and supplies materials to regional

health directorates. The Registrar writes quarterly and annual reports on progress, as well as activity and campaign, among others.

186.   In order to manage the allotted human resources, the Registrar conducts meetings with staff on guidelines, processes and issues on births and deaths registration, meetings with senior management teams, meetings with stakeholders and partners on activities to be implemented, and planning meetings with technical committees. Likewise, the Registrar organizes induction training for new employees and for students on practicum, identifies and nominates staff for training on ICT, for in-service training and for workshops. Among his/her administration duties, the Registrar must assign roles and responsibilities to staff, and ensure maintenance of discipline and ethics in work.

187.   At the lowest level, the local registrars are charged with verifying documents and interviewing applicants. The documents required for registering a birth are as follows: clinic cards, attestations from both village chiefs (alkalo) and district chief, completed statutory declaration form. On the other hand, the documents required for registering a death are: the medical certificate, including of cause of death, and attestation from village chief (alkalo). During the application processes for births and deaths certificates, local registrars conduct interviews to applicants and informants to assess authenticity and completeness of application forms, after which they give approval and endorsement of authentic and completed forms and authorize registration and certification of applicants by signing completed births and deaths certificates.

188.   Local registrars manually record births and deaths information, and physical registers are used for storing information at the local registry offices, as there is neither a central data archive in Gambia, nor computerized data storage and processing. Thus, if verification or authentication of a birth or death certificate is needed, the search and retrieval of information from old records is also done manually onsite or via a formal authentication request letter between local registration offices.

South Africa

189.   The representative of South Africa delivered a presentation on the relevant legislative framework for the registration of vital events, explained the structure of the information repository and gave an overview of the challenges faced by civil registration, as well as the ongoing mitigation strategies. The South African Department of Home Affairs has legislation and programs pertaining to civil registration, and has coordinated actions and integration with other departments and systems meant to improve civil registration. The departmental public awareness campaigns and programs, and collaboration with stakeholders continue to provide positive results to socio-cultural beliefs about civil registration, giving emphasis to rural and farm areas.

190.   The civil registration structure in South Africa is headed by the Department of Home Affairs, aided by offices in each province, and rooted in district and local level registration offices; according to the legal framework, it is a centralised civil registration system. The Department of Home Affairs formulates policy at the national level, based on legislation, regulations and supplementary order papers. It dictates strategies, monitors

and evaluates, and acts as a records man. The Constitutional mandates its national competency, and sets the principles of cooperative governance. Operations are conducted in a decentralised manner. Provincial offices have a role of coordination and oversight of the district and local offices, and are charged with the delivery of a quality service.

191.   The functions and powers of local registrars encompass taking applications and making registrations. Their access rights in the National Population Register include capturing, viewing and printing information, but not amending or rectifying records. Local registrars in South Africa investigate and verify information, issue certificates (unabridged birth, marriage and death), participate in inter-agency engagements, conduct outreach programmes, conduct quality assurance exercises, ensure access to services, and support public education and stakeholder engagement.

192.   This presentation also entailed detailed processes related to birth, identification, marriage and death. The legislative framework for birth is comprised by the Constitution, and the Birth and Death Registration Amendment Act, which apart from regulating the registration of births and deaths, regulates the amendments and rectification of particulars of persons. The designated informant of a notice of birth is a person having charge (parents or legal guardian) of the child; notice must take place within 30 days after the birth of such child. A diagram illustrated the birth registration process for nationals of South Africa in the country and abroad.

193.   In the case of deaths, the notice of death form is completed by the medical practitioner as confirmation that a person has died. This form includes a sealed section on causes of death that is used only for statistical purposes.   If applicable, in lieu of the notice of death, a traditional leader can also notify that a person has died by completing a death report form. Based on either of these documents, the Department of Home Affairs, verifies the particulars of the deceased on the National Population Register and the accompanying documents (copy of identity document of the deceased, copy of identity document of the informant and appointment letter of the funeral undertaker). Information is then captured on the National Population Register and notifications, including causes of death are forwarded to Statistics South Africa for vital statistics compilation. A diagram illustrated the death registration process.

194.   The legislative framework for marriage is based on the Marriage Act and the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act. The former makes provision for the solemnisation of civil marriages, while the latter makes provision for, regulates and specifies the requirements for a valid customary marriage. Civil marriages can only be solemnized by duly designated marriage officers. The required age for civil marriages is 18 years, while for customary marriages, it is negotiated customarily. The legislative framework for marriage is completed by immigration laws if one member of the couple is non-south African in possession of a passport or permit. Then, a letter of no impediment must be issued by the immigration authority, or a declaration or affidavit in the case of refugees or asylum seekers. The representative of South Africa walked the audience through the process of registration of a civil marriage and a civil union between two South African citizens; the solemnization and registration of a civil marriage or civil union between a South African citizen and other party who is not in possession of a South

African identity number or is a foreign national; and solemnization and registration of a civil marriage and civil union between two foreign nationals.

195.   The content of the information repository, called National Population Register, was described by the representative of South Africa. The inputs to this data base are: identity number, name and surname, residential status, marital status, birth information, citizenship, death information, passport information, control flags, immigration information, fingerprint information, archive information. All inputs are obtained from registration, including civil registration. On the other hand, the outputs consist of verification of data, identification, identity book, passport and certificates.

196.   The presentation elaborated on the challenges currently being faced the Department of Home Affairs. Late birth registration was highlighted in this context, which is being addressed through enforcement of new legislation and effecting penalties after 2015. In the case of late registration of death, a public education and awareness plan is being carried out, as well as regulations to enforce registration of death within 72 hrs. There is also inadequate knowledge of birth registration amongst other persons in some areas; national psyche and consciousness to make civil registration a natural civic duty is not at desired levels. Cultural and religious barriers remain, e.g. not wanting to name the child right after birth. The registration of deaths in rural remote areas represents a significant challenge. To tackle this, a communication strategy is in place.

197.   Integration is an important issue; the systems are not integrated with other departments, though information is shared through a Memorandum of Understanding. IT systems within departments are stand alone, not compatible. Moreover, there are millions of historical records that are paper based, which represents a practical difficulty. Finally, some areas lack or have weak network or connectivity, this makes transmission of records very difficult to achieve on an ongoing basis.

198.   The representative of South Africa presented a number of mitigation strategies presently in place to address these challenges. A campaign on the National Population Register was launched in 2010; stakeholder forums were established; hospital connectivity was improved; immediate issuance of unabridged birth certificates was introduced; mobile offices and high impact outreach programmes; intensive communication strategy using various platforms and mediums (TV, radio, billboards); production and distribution of promotional materials (pamphlets and posters); Memorandum of Understanding and collaboration with Health, Education, Agri-South Africa, Statistics South Africa and Human Sciences Research Council; legislation review with emphasis on birth registration within 30 days and death registration within 72 hrs. and proclamation of registration regulations; revamping of registration process, making it easily understandable; focus on quality and completeness by changing forms and requiring biometrics and paternity information; staff training; notable leadership by securing the Minister's advice, face and champion; and collaboration with municipalities.

199.   After hearing the theoretical presentation by UNSD and the four country interventions on roles and duties of civil registration at the local-level, and noting that sessions 10 and 12 were complimentary to session 11 thematic-wise, the workshop

reiterated the postponement of discussions until session 12. Thus, the discussions pertaining to sessions 10, 11 and 12 were held concurrently.

Session 12. Civil registration process: place, time, cost, late registration

200.   Similarly to sessions 10 and 11, this session comprised an introductory theoretical presentation by a representative of UNSD followed by four country representatives who talked about the process of civil registration and its features.

201.   The presentation delivered by UNSD defined and elaborated on place of registration, time of registration, late and delayed registration, and proofs. The place of registration can be either the place of occurrence or the place of usual residence, depending on what the law specifies for each vital event. Place of occurrence is usually straight-forward, however, place of usual residence has its operational complications in certain circumstances. The two options are not mutually exclusive; in many cases the law requires both. International guidelines dictate that the place of registration for live births, foetal deaths and infant deaths must be the place of usual residence of the mother. In the case of infant deaths, it can also be the place of usual residence of the infant if it is different to that of the mother. For deaths, the place of registration should be the place of usual residence of the deceased; and for marriages, the place of occurrence, as the previous place of residence is not relevant.

202.   The registration process starts when the registrar is presented with a proof of the occurrence of the vital event by the informant. These proofs can be legal documents, medical certificates, personal declarations or witnesses. Documentary proofs are, in general, more reliable that declarations. However, they are not always available, so the local registrar needs to decide whether personal and witness declarations suffice for registration purposes. In the registration of some events, such as divorces, annulments of marriage, judicial separations, recognitions, legitimations, adoptions and marriages, documentary proofs are irreplaceable.

203.   Documentary evidence presented to the registrar originates in many different institutions. That is why the registrar needs to be familiar with these forms and formats, for which he/she should undergo regular training in updates, and the registration system as a whole has to be consulted when forms change. Of particular importance is the content of the documentation related to statistical requirements.

204.   The time allowed for registration refers to the period of time within which the informant must report the occurrence of the vital event and its characteristics to the registrar. This time should be clearly specified in the Registration Law for each vital event. Typically, a shorter period is preferable to a longer one, as the passage of time may lead to miss-reporting, underreporting and factual errors in reporting. The shorter period is also necessary for public health reasons in the cases of death. The time period has to be identical throughout the country. In some events, such as for deaths, for example, there may be more than one deadline for registration – one for the death itself and another

for the cause of death, given the time needed for certification of the cause of death in certain circumstances. There is a grace period for each type of event that normally does not exceed one year. The representative of UNSD gave some examples of grace period for different vital events. For live births, it is typically up to one month; for deaths and foetal deaths, it is three days; for marriages, the same day; for divorce, it is seven days from the date the court granted the divorce.

205.   Late registration is a registration of the vital event after the legally specified period but within the grace period. On the other hand, delayed registration is a registration of the vital event after the grace period has expired. The Registration Law has to contain specific provisions for cases of delayed registration, like requesting additional documentation and proof, and fees, but not penalties. Factors causing late and delayed registration lie either within the registration system or within the community. Within the registration system, demanding procedures in terms of time and complexity may affect the timeliness of registration, we well as high costs of registration and registration offices that are not easily accessible. Within the community, lack of awareness, combined with lack of interest cause late and delayed registration.

206.   The first country to present on the registration process followed in their national context was Zimbabwe, followed by Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Zimbabwe

207.   In Zimbabwe, the Registrar General's Department is housed in the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is a government department, and as such, all vital civil registration documents and consumables for national identity documents are purchased from suppliers by the Registrar General's Department. All civil registration operations including national mobile registration exercises are borne by the government. That is why government provides an annual budget to civil registration, which is subject to auditing. Furthermore, the Constitution recognizes the Registrar General as a public servant.

208.   The Registrar General's Department comprises a central registry headquarters, ten provincial registries, 72 administrative district registries, and 206 sub offices. In addition, there is a registration office at each central hospital, provincial hospital and district hospital. Registrations are normally done at static offices; the Registrar General's Department also carries out a national mobile registration to complement registration centres. The intention is to reach the remotest areas and bring registration closer to the people. This is however dependent on availability of funds.

209.   All vital civil registrations are carried out through an integrated computerized system, the Zimbabwe Population Registration System.

210.   The Government has promulgated statutory instruments which specify the place, time, cost and the late registrations of vital civil registration events. In terms of place of registration, births and deaths are registered at sub offices and district offices, while

marriage records are done at provincial registries and at the central registry. Births that have occurred abroad are registered at the central registry.

211.   In terms of proofs mandatory for registration, the representative of Zimbabwe reported that, for a child born in a medical institution, a birth confirmation record and the parents' national identity documents are required to register the child. The birth confirmation record states the place of birth, and the name of the medical institution where the child was born. For a child born outside a medical institution, the midwife is required as a witness and/or a letter from the village head to confirm the birth in the given locality together with the parents' national identity documents.

212.   Regarding time, the timeliness of the registrations is embedded in the law. The law provides for mandatory vital civil registration, setting the deadline for registration of births to be within 42 days; and of national identity documents to be obtained on attaining the age of 16 years. The legislation also provides for prosecution for late registration although this was never pursued. It was felt that citizens should willingly embrace and welcome civil registration rather than view it as punitive.

213.   However, there are policies in place which cater for late registration. For instance, births registered for children aged 1 – 6 years are issued for free, and national identity documents registered at 17 years and above attract a nominal fee of US$2.00. In general, the service to citizens of initial registration is provided for free but the documents, machinery, consumables, labour, rentals etc. are paid for by government. None of these costs are transferred to citizens to pay for initial registration. For duplicates, on the contrary, there are registration fees, which are gazette. Duplicate birth registrations attract a US$5.00 charge, and duplicate national identity documents attract a US$2.00 charge

214.   The Registrar General's Department has identified some of the causes of late registration. For births, factors affecting registration timeliness are: prolonged paternity disputes between parents; one or both parents reside outside the country; parents insist on consulting relatives on the name of the child; mother said to be recovering from caesarian operation; absence of an incentive to register early; one or both parents don not have documents. For national identity documents, the main factor affecting registration timeliness is that some youngsters drop out of school and do not register early. For deaths, factors affecting registration timeliness are: a general lack of appreciation by society to register early especially in rural areas; incentive for registration absent until when dealing with the deceased's pension or estate; high burial costs in urban areas are prohibitive, so some deceased persons are taken in the middle of the night to rural areas for burial.

Kenya

215.   The representative of Kenya presented an administrative and operational overview of the Department of Civil Registration Services and the civil registration and vital statistics process flow. The civil registration function in Kenya is governed under the Births and Deaths Registration Act, which sets out provisions for registration of all births and deaths occurring in Kenya and of Kenyan citizens occurring abroad. This piece of legislation designates responsibilities for the archival, preservation and security

of births and deaths records; the issuance of birth and death certificates; and processing, analysis and dissemination of vital statistics from registration records.   Marriages, divorces and annulments are under a different authority.

216.   The administrative framework was described as follows: civil registration is a national government function in the Ministry of Interior, placed under one directorate which includes the National Registration Bureau, Immigration Services and Refugee Affairs. Civil registration ranks highly among other national government functions in Kenya. This is in recognition of its security impact. As stated above, the legal mandate only provides for vital events proper (births and deaths), and vertical events (recognition and legitimation).

217.   Operationally, the national system of registration encompasses a structure of a national office and a number of sub national offices known as district or sub county registries. Kenya has only three cities; the rest of the population lives in rural areas. The civil registration process is hinged on a community-based system, where local government administrators (Assistant Chiefs) register home events while nurses or clinicians register health facility events.

218.   The presentations included two process diagrams; one corresponded to the current flow and another corresponded to a new flow that integrates the community in order to notify local authorities and hospitals of the occurrence of a vital event. Another diagram illustrated the linkages amongst the different actors in the civil registration and vital statistics system. The civil registration and vital statistics system shares data with several organizations with different data requirements, such as banks, telecommunication companies, research and education institutions, tax agency, and elections authority.

Mozambique

219.   The representative of Mozambique elaborated on the responsibility of civil registration in this country and the operational plan of the civil registration authority. The Ministry of Justice is charged with registering vital events through the Civil Registry Office. However, since the registration of vital events is a multisectoral endeavor there are other actors involved, such as the Ministry of Health, and the Nacional Institute of Statistics.

220.   Registration of vital events in Mozambique is mandatory and there are deadlines thereof. The deadline for birth registration is 120 days, and for death, 48 hours with expansion to 90 days. As sanctioned by the law, there are penalties for registration of an event after the deadline; these consist in allocating the costs of registration to the person who should be responsible for declaring the event. There are different reasons that cause the population not to register their event within the period established by law, specifically: distance, associated cost, lack of knowledge about the importance of registration and cultural factors. In view of this evidence, a number of actions have been taken to broaden the base of data, i.e. to achieve a greater coverage of civil registration services on the entire country.

221.   The presentation included a diagram illustrating the flow of information, from registration and certification of births to the production of vital statistics. Likewise, a diagram illustrating procedures for notification, certification and registration of deaths occurred at home or outside the hospital was displayed.

222.   An operational plan has been designed, comprising two main points. Firstly, strengthening and improving the coverage of registration of vital events. In this context, activities will be conducted for the recovery and digitization of information. Linked to this a digital system of civil registration data management will be developed. The strategy contemplates the expansion of coverage not only in terms of increasing the number of registrars and civil registration posts, but also through the use of SMS as a means of notification. Infrastructure in local registration offices will also be strengthened, including equipment.

223.   Secondly, promoting the integration of databases and generating vital statistics. Currently, the institutions involved in civil registration and vital statistics, particularly the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Statistics operate in isolation; therefore, the information produced is not integrated. The operational plan includes actions to integrated information in a single database, which in turn would enable generation and dissemination of reliable and credible vital statistics.

224.   In addition, the representative of Mozambique talked about the need for legislation reform through the review and harmonization of legislation on civil registration and vital statistics. Existing laws on civil registration and vital statistics do not include the use of information and communication technologies as a means for recording and sharing data, and as such do not provide standards on the regulation of the use of technology. Thus, registration is done on paper, and all processes are paper based.

225.   Sensitization of stakeholders on the importance of civil registration and vital statistics is also greatly needed. This will be achieved through information and education strategies targeting stakeholders, including the general public.

Tanzania

226.   The representative of Tanzania detailed the process of civil registration, its legal framework, and operational organization. Civil registration in Tanzania is governed by two laws. Registration of births and deaths is governed by the law known as the Births and Deaths Registration Act, which was last amended in 2009. Matters relating to marriages and divorce are governed by the Law of Marriage Act which was revised in 2002.

227.   Civil registration is a centralized responsibility of the Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency. Registration activities are conducted at the ward level, not lower. Hence, it has its challenges. The presentation included explanatory diagrams for registration processes of: births occurred in health facilities and at home, deaths occurred in health facilities and at home, marriages and divorces.

228.	Registration of births is free, but there is a fee for issuing the certificate, which is higher if the registration occurs after 90 days of the birth, but before the tenth birthday of the child; after the tenth birthday, the fee increases again. Registration of deaths is also free, and there is also a fee for issuing the certificate. This fee is higher if the death is registered after 30 days, but before ten years; and it increases again if registration takes places after ten years of occurrence. In addition, in case the death is registered after 30 days, then the relative has to bring supporting documents (minutes from relatives meeting to appoint the administrator of deceased's estate).

229.	Licenses to conduct a marriage are issued for a fee, as well as marriage certificate. The cost of licenses depends on whether it is a normal or a special license, and the place where the marriage is taking place. Divorce certificates are issued for a fee upon presentation of Court decree and marriage certificate.

230.	The representative of Tanzania finalized her presentation by mentioning that the country is completing a comprehensive assessment of civil registration and vital statistics, where the whole process of registration has been reviewed and new proposal will be recommended.

231.	After hearing the theoretical presentation by UNSD and the four country interventions on the civil registration process, participants held concurrently the discussions pertaining to sessions 10, 11 and 12, noting that these sessions were complimentary to each other thematic-wise.

232.	To start the discussion, participants thanked UNSD for the three detailed presentations on national and local arrangements of civil registration as well as process. Delegations asked how UNSD, UNECA and partners like Unicef and UNFPA would be able to help countries to put the revised Principles and Recommendations into practice and merge theory with what happens on the ground. Countries are very far from producing indicators to monitor the current and upcoming development agenda. They emphasized the need to find a way to support those countries that are lagging behind, such as Gambia.

233.	Some participants highlighted that, in terms of support to civil registration and vital statistics, apart from budget, political support is of utmost importance. The representative of Nigeria was happy to report that in this country political will at high level which represents a good opportunity to improve the system

234.	A representative of UNSD stated that these comments would be taken on board, and that UNSD and UNECA would continue to make efforts to support the region. In fact, comparing with the situation seen six years ago in the workshop conducted for countries of the Southern Africa Development Community, considerable progress can be seen. A representative of UNECA pointed out the need to foster south-south cooperation within Africa, so that those countries that have found good solutions can give advice.

235.	Noting the twelve country presentations on national and local structure of civil registration and its process, participants concluded that there are various levels of

development of civil registration systems across the region. They wondered to what extent the Principles and Recommendations can be customized so as to fit country particular situations. A representative of UNSD clarified that customization is a necessary step that countries need to take, but within the standard principles, without undermining comparability. There might be countries peculiarities that are not reflected in the Principles and Recommendations, to this effect, UNECA can work on an addendum.

236.   A question was raised regarding the allotment of budget for civil registration activities, and the recommendations therein. USND explained that there are different solutions to tackle the budget issue, and that practices vary. The Principles and Recommendations dictate that civil registration belong to civil services and as such, it needs to have its own government budget. Particularly, this budget should not come from donors. UNECA seconded this and exemplified using the issue of information technology. He noted that there is wide disparity among countries, from not having phones, to a sophisticated IT network. Often, donors offer technological solutions that are not sustainable once they withdraw. Thus, donors and development partners can help, but not run civil registration; that is the government's responsibility.

237.   Participants discussed the issue of displaced population and refugees' civil registration, in the light that countries are working to end statelessness. In Botswana, the registration of refugees is carried out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); however the Department of Civil and National Registration does register their births. In South Africa, refugees are covered by the Department of Home Affairs, but their records are stored in a different database. In Uganda, the Registration Services Bureau issues refugees the first copy of both the short and long certificates for free; the place of registration for refugees is a special point designated by law.

238.   To this effect, a representative of UNSD expressed that refugees are usually under the mandate of UNHCR, which is responsible for their registration.

239.   There was another question on how countries are obtaining information from private health facilities. A representative from Tanzania shared their country practice; there, registration takes place in both public and private hospitals.

240.   Delegations were also interested to hear some practical advice about routine evaluation of civil registration at the country level. A representative of UNSD invited participants to take note of session 13 and 14, which would deal with an assessment used in Africa. The tool can be refined taking into account country experiences and lessons learned.

241.   There was a thorough exchange of practices amongst countries in reference to the costs of registration. In Kenya, there is no cost for the first certificate. Likewise, in South Africa, the first certificate which is proof of registration is for free, but if the certificate is lost, then the responsibility for paying is the citizen's. In Gambia, certificates are free for registration of persons that are under five years of age. The representative of Zimbabwe added that giving unlimited number of certificates for free, would render the cost for government unbearable.

242. In Ghana, the basic certificate is free for the public and is funded by Unicef. However, if a person needs a more detailed certificate (showing additional information) for a particular purpose, for example to get their passport, then there is a fee to be paid. In Uganda, there is a fee for both short and detailed certificates. Detailed certificates are required by some agencies and embassies. In addition, in Uganda, issuance is done in provincial offices, not local offices, which implies an extra cost because of transportation of the person from his/her locality to the provincial office.

243. In Tanzania, certificates carry a fee; however, the assessment exercise recommended that they should be free of charge.

244. UNSD said that registration authorities and partners need to do a better job in conveying to the population of the benefits of registering events. The first copy of the certificate must be at no cost, but starting with the second issuance, there is no conflict in charging for this service.

245. UNECA highlighted that issuance of certificate is responsibility of local registrars, not headquarters. For amendments, delayed or other complicated registration can be raised to a higher registrar level, but the normal registration and issuance of certificates must be done by local registrar. UNECA also said that charging individuals for the certificate but not for the registration makes no sense, as it is contradictive and confusing.

246. In addition a representative of UNECA highly recommended that the passport office should not need a special certificate, or, in the case they have to verify some specific information, then they should be able to consult with the registration authority directly. He also added that in some countries certificates expire after certain time, which he recommended against.

247. During the discussion, participants touched again upon the definition of population register; is it bringing all systems together to construct identities, like some of countries have presented? A representative of UNSD reminded delegations that a key factor is that population registers are fed from civil registration. A representative of UNECA asked whether Swaziland is bringing together civil registration and a population register.

248. Some participants reiterated the issues surrounding confidentiality. To this effect, laws need to define how to protect and store information, as well as regulate access.

249. Towards the end of the discussion, the workshop summarized the main points of the debate as follows:

250. The development of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa is far from being homogenous, which raises the point of mobilizing resources at the regional and global level. This point will be taken up in the forthcoming Ministerial Conference.

251. The practices of countries in terms of charging fees vary. If the spirit of the Principles and Recommendations is to be followed, registration must be free and first

certificate should be free. It is clear that this is not the case in all countries in Africa, which goes against the rights of the child.

252.   Running civil registration is the responsibility of the government, not donors.

253.   Accessibility to information remains a challenge; most countries are still striving to achieve easy access.

Session 13. Tools for assessing a civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa

254.   This session comprised an introductory theoretical presentation by a representative of UNECA followed by two country representatives who talked about their experiences with the implementation of the assessment tool, the obstacles encountered and the lessons learned.

255.   UNECA elaborated on the rationale behind the assessment of civil registration systems, and the assessment tools per se. The rationale derived from the second Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration. In Resolution 15a, ministers we committed to urgently develop costed national plans of action on civil registration and vital statistics that reflect individual country priorities based on comprehensive assessments to be undertaken with the support of the Secretariat and partner organizations. In Resolution 16, Member States were exhorted to undertake in-depth assessment of the state of their national civil registration systems and develop a strategic and action plans for improving civil registration and vital statistics.

256.   Thus, the purpose of the assessments is primarily to provide the evidence required to prioritise interventions for strengthening the civil registration and vital statistics system. In addition, the assessment intends to provide a standards based review of civil registration and vital statistics systems, mirrored against the standards set by the UN Principles and Recommendations.

257.   For these assessment exercises, the resources that UNECA has made available are: a comprehensive assessment tool, which is based on the tool originally developed by WHO and adapted to the African context; a set of assessment guidelines; guidelines on strategic planning; a pool of civil registration and vital statistics experts that are trained to support countries in the assessment and planning processes. The assessment tools were developed to be in line with the UN Principles and Recommendations.

258.   The scope of the assessment covers four primary vital events i.e. birth, death, marriage and divorce. The review covers eight key components, namely: policy and legislative environment for civil registration and vital statistics; management and organization; resources (infrastructure, human and financial); forms and materials; operations (processes and practices); database management and utilization; advocacy and communication; and monitoring and evaluation.

259.   The presentation included a table showing the progress made by countries so far, according to the different stages of the assessment exercise.

260.   The representative of UNECA ended her presentation by requesting countries to share the major lessons learnt, the main challenges experienced, and what they considered the way forward.

261.   The first country to present on their experience with the assessment tool was Botswana, followed by Zambia.

Botswana

262.   The representative of Botswana detailed the assessment exercise undertaken with the tool developed by UNECA, the successes and challenges thereof, and the lessons learned from the process and results. According to the resolutions of the second Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration regarding the commitment to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the status of civil registration and vital statistics, as well as to develop a medium term strategic plan, a training on assessment of civil registration and vital statistics was carried out in May 2013 in Gaborone, Botswana. During this training, the guidelines developed by UNECA on civil registration and vital statistics assessment were discussed and adopted.

263.   Subsequently, the Batswana Department of Civil and National Registration of the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs conducted the comprehensive assessment from October 2013, lasting for almost a year. The exercise was led by the Director, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Administration of Justice and Statistics Botswana. The assessment was co-guided technically as well by a senior consultant who came in and out of the country as per need.

264.   The exercise objectives were formulated as follows: to assess the relevance of and gaps in policy and legislative framework governing civil registration and vital statistics; to document processes and practices for registration of vital events at different operational levels; to assess the adequacy of current structures and procedures; to ascertain the extent to which information on vital events are registered , captured, processed and compiled; to review records management, storage, archival and retrieval procedures and facilities; to identify challenges and best practices in the management of registration and data production; and to determine required improvements to achieve quality service delivery and products and universal and complete registration.

265.   The squad consisted of forty officers, organized in eight task teams and drawn from the four key agencies involved in civil registration and vital statistics, namely Administration of Justice, Health, Labour and Home Affairs, and Statistics Botswana. This squad planned and conducted the assessment, including desk reviews and field visits. The task teams visited a selection of locations across the country to obtain information from interviews and direct observations. The selection procedure was deliberate, ensuring that the communities visited included both rural and remote areas.

266.   Based on all the information collected during these visits, the task teams then proceeded to develop a draft five-year strategic plan which is still being finalized. The findings of the assessment are to be shared at a national consultative forum (called Pitso), which was scheduled for 16 December 2014. This forum targets the non-governmental sector, the private sector, various government departments, the UN family and the University of Botswana, as well as the members of the public. The main objective of the Pitso (consultative forum) is to share the findings of the assessment with stakeholders and solicit feedback, achieve buy-in from stakeholders, as well as to position civil registration and vital statistics in the country towards the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda.

267.   Even before the consultative forum takes place, there are already a few successes of the completion of the civil registration and vital statistics comprehensive assessment in Botswana. Political commitment was a key factor; the undertaking enjoyed the support of high ranking officials, including the leadership of the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs and other Ministers responsible for civil registration and vital statistics. Commitment and resilience at executive level also played a great role, permanent secretaries and directors, as well as general staff demonstrated a high level of commitment. This was also reflected in a fluent cooperation amongst agencies involved, which mobilized their resources as needed (transport, human resources, funds). Cross fertilization of learning and ideas among team members from different agencies led to improved understanding of registration processes.

268.   In terms of technical and financial support, the assessment succeeded to secure the cooperation of development partners (UNFPA, Government of Botswana, WHO, AfDB, UNECA). A great success was obtaining good reception during most visits to organizations and offices for interviews.

269.   The representative of Botswana also cited some of the challenges that were faced during the conduction of the assessment exercise. For instance, initially there were varying commitment levels amongst stakeholders coupled with varying understanding of roles of each stakeholder. Therefore, establishing collaboration and coordination between civil registration and vital statistics stakeholders was tedious and very demanding. In addition, during field visits, some respondents were not forthcoming with information.

270.   In terms of execution, the exercise experienced inadequate coordination of development partners at country level, yet they were very supportive in their own way. In addition, there were logistical challenges along the way, and time initially allocated for the study (3 months) was inadequate.

271.   The Department of Civil and National Registration can draw a number of lessons from the assessment exercise. First, a project of this nature requires adequate resources, an allotted time of minimum 6 months and sufficient budget for successful execution. Additionally, a timed and robust operational plan must be designed and closely monitored for possible adaptation, especially during initial implementation phases. Proper logistics management (accommodation and meal allowances, transport) is key, as well as timely resolution of queries to avoid staff disgruntlement. This includes the

development of a plan for business continuity in case of any risks materializing (transport breakdown, officers on sick leave). Second, resources must be pooled from across the stakeholders' spectrum, earmarked and dedicated to the exercise during its implementation; this point refers to personnel, finance, transport, materials. Third, the assessment requires a combination of adequate technical and analytical skills to support it; this point can be understood in terms of research, analysis, strategic planning, financial management, operational, public relations. Fourth, a sound training on the assessment tool is required prior to undertaking the assessment in order to create same understanding, expectations and execution. Coupled with this, adaptation of the tool must be undertaken to tailor it to the local environment without compromising on what must be achieved; no one size fits it all. Cultural sensitivities must be taken care of to accommodate unity in diversity as well as to provide for special services, particularly when dealing with minority groups; this relates for instance to language barriers. Fifth, an adequate communication and motivation strategy plays a prime role; there is a clear need for an information, education and communication, and change management plan to manage stakeholder expectations and to share information timely to avoid disruption and failure. Both interviewees and staff need to be prepared on the value of the exercise in order to build trust and commitment, to motivate them to cooperate, and to obtain relevant and. At the national level, there is need for lobbying especially of the leadership and stakeholders to procure buy-in, commitment and facilitation in decision making. At the local level, leadership figures must be engaged for easier access to communities.

272.   The presentation from Botswana finished by highlighting the importance of continuous linkages and collaboration with UNECA for technical support. Sharing experiences was central during the exercise, and will also help to better guide other countries in the region and to update on the status of countries.

Zambia

273.   The representative of Zambia elaborated on their experience in using the civil registration and vital statistics assessment tools. In general terms, the tools are comprehensive, sometimes offering a little more detail than may be needed. The attention given in the cause of death section is excellent. However, the entire business process from death registration through to generating cause of death statistics must be worked out, which poses challenges. In addition, some questions are repetitive and may need alignment to appropriate sections. Thus, the assessment tool should have been prepared in principle on key issues for assessment and not necessarily in questionnaire format. This shift may encourage ingenuity when evaluating the different issues.

274.   In order to properly understand the tools at the country level, a meeting on the background and purpose of the tools was organised for the national technical group. Afterwards, a workshop was conducted for in-depth study of the tools where each technical member presented key assessment issues. Subsequently, task teams were formed based on assessment key issues and they were trained in the use of the Tools.

275.   Issues were segregated topic wise for desk review and for field visits. A range of reference materials were prepared for desk review, while questionnaires were prepared

for field visits based on questions from the tools. Decisions were also made on institutions for administering the questionnaires.

276.   The presentation from Zambia finished by providing feedback on the use of the planning guide developed by UNECA. The presenter stated that it offers good steps to follow in the planning process. However, there is need to review and simplify it. Furthermore, the guide offers a good framework of the outline of a model strategic plan. Yet, it would desirable to have brief explanation notes of the outline for the strategic plan presented in the planning guide.

277.   After hearing the theoretical presentation by UNECA and the two country interventions on experiences of implementation of the assessment tools, participants decided to postpone feedback for session 14, noting that sessions 13 and 14 were complimentary to each other thematic-wise.

Session 14. Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS)

278.   This session comprised an introductory theoretical presentation by a representative of UNECA followed by a discussion session where comments were given to the presentations by the representatives of Botswana and Zambia pertaining to session 13, as well as a general exchange of reflections on country assessment experiences.

279.   The representative of UNECA presented the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics and explained how it intends to translate political commitments into actions. His presentation included a diagram illustrating how a good civil registration and vital statistics system supports good governance at the individual, community and aggregate levels. A strong civil registration and vital statistics system provides population with legal documents, an identity management system and reliable vital statistics, which in turn are the base for policy making and programme implementation that enable the realization of human rights.

280.   The new paradigm in civil registration and vital statistics systems is based on the realization that they are multi-disciplinary in nature and can be improved only through a holistic and coordinated approach. It requires strong legislative provisions, appropriate organization structure, efficient management and operations backed by suitable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Above all, political commitment is required to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems. Thus was born the APAI-CRVS that derives policy guidance from the Conference of Ministers responsible for civil registration. This conference is now institutionalized as a permanent conference under the African Union Commission.

281.   The guiding principles of APAI-CRVS are: promoting country ownership and leadership; promoting coordination between Civil Registration Office, National Statistics Office, Health Ministry and other stakeholders at country level; promoting phased-based, holistic and integrated approach; establishing strong partnerships and coordination at

regional and country levels; building capacities of national civil registration and vital statistics institutions; and promoting innovations and knowledge sharing. The representative displayed an ideal model of the civil registration and vital statistics system and its multi-sectorial linkages.

282. UNECA introduced how momentum at the highest political level has been created. The most important milestones were the first and second ministerial conferences (Addis Ababa in 2010 and Durban in 2012) which came out with strong declarations; the endorsement of the APAI-CRVS and a medium term plan; and the institutionalization of the conference under the African Union permanent structure.

283. Some key declarations from the second Conference of Ministers were mentioned. Member States committed to urgently undertake comprehensive assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics systems and develop action plan, including estimated costs, with the support of the Secretariat (UNECA) and partner organizations; they called upon development partners to continue their support to countries on capacity development and resource mobilization; they also requested countries to establish high-level coordination mechanisms involving all stakeholders; and they called upon countries to allocate adequate human and financial resources for day to day operations of civil registration and vital statistics.

284. As a first stage, UNECA identified common challenges in countries. The most prominent include lack of demand for registration; high cost of registration; distance to registration centres; persistence of colonial law with only incremental changes; lack of linkages between systems, for example with national identity; inappropriate organizational arrangement; incorrect and inefficient business processes; insufficient training of staff; absence of performance monitoring or supervision; inappropriate use of technology; poor service delivery; vital statistics variables not included or not compiled; inexistent or inadequate causes of death system; and huge backlogs with no systematic approach.

285. The representative of UNECA emphasized the need of moving from a current business process to a new business process. To achieve this, registration authorities must understand their current situation and their desired situation, identify what are the changes needed, and articulate a strategy to achieve the desired situation. A range of actions are needed for changing a business process. For instance, actions such as advocacy, revision of the law, innovation, modifications to the design of the reporting and registration forms, revision of the data items in the registration form, introduction of information and communications technology, capacity development, coordination improvement. UNECA invited participants to raise themselves from within the system and take an aerial view of the system, as well as to look around to find solutions.

286. When concluding his presentation, the representative of UNECA delivered a number of key messages. He encouraged delegations to identify low hanging fruits, as small changes may help quick wins. He advised to make civil registration services accessible to the population, stressing the importance of moving information rather than people. This may actually not need the creation of separate structures. Making civil

registration and vital statistics inter-operable, introducing appropriate technology with the right business process were also underlined as key actions for improving the system. Furthermore he advised an orderly approach to assessment exercises, i.e. finding problems and then solutions, rather than the other way around. Finally, the role of coordination cannot be over emphasized as the way of establishing an efficient and sustainable civil registration and vital statistics system.

287.   After hearing the theoretical presentation by UNECA on the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, and reiterating that sessions 13 and 14 were complimentary to each other and to session 11 thematic-wise, the workshop held discussions pertaining to these sessions concurrently.

288.   During the discussion, participants mentioned that it was difficult to work with the tools; instructions and questions were confusing at times. It was further said that it was not easy to translate them into questionnaires to gather information on the field, and that there were sections that were not relevant to the target group, so some countries decided not to use these sections in their assessment. In some countries, like Tanzania, the expert provided by UNECA helped in understanding and using the tools. The representative of UNECA acknowledged that, indeed, the tools are not easy. However, it was important for the countries to undertake this challenge themselves because it means that they themselves are conducting the assessment, which is far better than hiring a consultant who will do everything. Thanks to this undertaking, the lessons and work will not be forgotten. The civil registration and vital statistics system is complex, so evaluating it is too.

289.   Participants suggested that questions should not be left completely up to countries to formulate. Some should be the same, so that resulting information is comparable. Other delegations proposed formulating a list of questions to select from according to country reality, to avoid framing questions freely. Further, some delegations said they wish the tools would have been tested in two or three countries, so that improvements would be made before rolling it out to the whole region. UNECA stated that the tools were based largely on the proposal of Queensland University and WHO, adapting it to Africa. For example, items on marriages were added. He clarified that questions within each section, should be regarded as a bunch, as guides towards finding an answer. As a qualitative questionnaire, it is not intended to have answers for each and every question. Yet, the representative of UNECA committed to seriously look at the repetitive questions to improve the tools.

290.   According to the representative of Kenya, the management component posed a challenge. A planning unit helped to fit the comprehensive assessment into a project. Other countries, such as Namibia, expressed that they were very ambitious in terms of time; the questionnaires were hastily tested and it took longer than expected to get stakeholders to come onboard. This was aggravated by the late arrival of the expert consultant to the exercise. South Africa emphasized the importance of securing cooperation of stakeholders and of pooling resources prior to embarking into this exercise. The representative of UNECA concurred with the need of allowing sufficient time to bring coordination to an acceptable level, and to pool donors.

291.   Touching upon the topic of resources, Namibia and Uganda recognized that the tools were not implemented in all regions due to lack of resources. Coupled with this, some countries shared the difficulties faced to take people out of their regular jobs to fully dedicate to the assessment for months.

292.   A number of countries customized the tools to adapt them to the national scenario (Tanzania, Swaziland, South Africa), which received the support of the representative of UNECA. Tanzania, for example, had the tools translated into Swahili, the mother language, to make questions more understandable for both interviewers and interviewees. In Swaziland, consultants were given a tour on the ground so they would understand national circumstances, which was very useful.

293.   Countries also reported cross-fertilization experiences. In this context, South Africa was invited by Swaziland to explain how they handled the cause of death issues. The representative of UNECA conveyed that thanks to this assessment process, there are champions of civil registration and vital statistics at both the regional and national level, and that mutual understanding has been created within and across countries.

294.   For both countries that have finished the process and are undergoing the preparation of the report, and countries that are still in the midst of the assessment, UNECA highlighted that task teams need to understand the whole civil registration and vital statistics process, not only their own piece. Everyone needs to go to the field, so that the revised business process is an evidence-based, collaborative piece of work.

Session 15. International collection of vital statistics and regional response rates for vital statistics

295.   A representative of UNSD made a presentation on the data and metadata international collection system, as well processing and dissemination through the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook*. The presentation included the level of responses to the Yearbook from African countries. The *Demographic Yearbook* is an international data collection and dissemination tool, which collects national demographic and social statistics through a number of questionnaires and disseminates those statistics at the international level. A great deal of the collection of demographic data depends on the replies received from countries.

296.   The data collected refer to vital statistics, population estimates, international migration and population and housing censuses, while the metadata collected encompasses information on quality and methods. The *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaires are dispatched to national statistics offices in electronic format (excel, xml), are customized for each country, and are basically a series of data tabulations, pre-filled with existing data. Attached to questionnaires, instructions and metadata worksheets are also sent. Questionnaires on population estimates, vital statistics and migration flows are dispatched every year, whereas the census questionnaires follow the census schedule of each country.

297.   The Vital Statistics Questionnaire, more specifically, is a series of tables distributed in ten sections: a summary for the last five years, live births, fertility rates, life tables, deaths, infant deaths, foetal deaths, abortions, marriages and divorces from more than 230 countries. The questionnaire also collects metadata such as the completeness of the statistics, methods used for data quality assessment, and whether the data were collected by occurrence or by registration.

298.   International comparability depends on completeness and accuracy of data produced by each country; differences in statistical definitions of vital events; diverse tabulation procedures, for example countries using different age groupings; and official estimates coming from sample surveys, which makes it difficult to disaggregate data and it's subject to sampling errors.

299.   From what had been collected from the participating African countries, it was found that, in average, Africa is the region with lowest response to UNSD questionnaires. Furthermore, there is a very low response to the vital statistics questionnaire, less than half of the requested tables are being provided by the countries in the room. Only five countries have been able to provide vital statistics generated from a civil registration on a regular basis during the last five years (Egypt, Kenya, Lesotho, Seychelles and South Africa). The other countries either have not provided any vital statistics in the recent past years, or sparsely because those data are usually based on a census or national projections.

300.   As for the quality of data, it was shown that Africa has the lowest coverage of both live births and dead registration. Moreover, coverage is lower for death registration, and there are also more countries for which there is no information on their system coverage. This means that they have not sent any metadata along with their data. Particularly for quality of cause of death, most of Africa practically does not have data. As discussed in the session on the Role of Health Institutions, this information is very important to monitor a range of health indicators, like maternal mortality, and to formulate policies to improve population health.

301.   The last part of the presentation explored the advantages of having country data disseminated by UNSD: enabling social and public health studies, as academic institutions and non-governmental organization gain access to the data; representation in the international setting means an opportunity to share progress and allows for international comparability, which is of key importance for global publications and monitoring development indicators. In addition, international compilation and dissemination of data supports informed decisions not only at the national level, but also at the regional and global level. These data are reviewed and studied by a wide range of agencies and aid institutions in order to organize their work programme and allocation of funds.

302.   Following the presentation, a number of countries pointed out that weak civil registration system in countries contributed to the lack of vital statistics in the region. Sometimes countries have to resort to survey data for the total number of births and deaths and disaggregation by other key variables is not possible. Regarding coverage,

other countries mentioned that, to date, they have had to rely on the results from the MICS survey, carried out by Unicef.

303.   Another issue raised by delegations, is that often, questionnaires do not reach the substantive official actually in charge of generating tabulations and filling out the questionnaires. Rather, the questionnaires reach only high ranking officials who fail to pass them on. A participant acknowledged that he had difficulties in understanding the questionnaires. In response, the representatives of UNSD downloaded a sample questionnaire from the division's website and walked participants through its contents, explaining the structure and logic of it.

Session 16. Country team work time

304.   This session required representatives of each country to team up and prepare a ten minute presentation on proposed strategies to improve the civil registration and vital statistics system for a specific vital event. Countries worked on a new business process, and needed actions to realise it.

305.   A template and guiding questions were prepared by UNSD and UNECA in order to support participants in their work. Specifically, the exercise required each country team to draw the current business process for the registration of a particular event allotted. The diagram should depict the whole process from registration to statistical compilation on the event. They had to identify the major bottlenecks in the current business process. Subsequently, country teams needed to draw the desired business process, keeping in mind the bottlenecks identified beforehand. Finally, five strategies that should be adopted to address the identified bottlenecks needed to be outlined.

306.   The event allotment was organized as follows: births occurring at home were assigned to Swaziland, Ethiopia and Lesotho; births occurring in health institutions were looked at by Ghana, Uganda and Gambia; deaths occurring at home were studied by Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Egypt and Namibia; deaths occurring in health institutions, including cause of death were assigned to Botswana, Zambia, Seychelles and Nigeria; finally, marriages were looked at by Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya.

307.   Since the workshop was attended by officials from both the National Statistics Office and the Civil Registrar, this presentation was intended to be prepared by the statisticians and registrars working together as a country team. This was in the spirit of fostering inter-agency understanding and collaboration.

Session 17. Strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa

308.   This session was the culmination of the work of country teams. It provided a platform for countries to share practical difficulties faced in the civil registration and vital

statistics process of a particular vital event, and proposed improvement strategies that are in line with the third revision of the Principles and Recommendations.
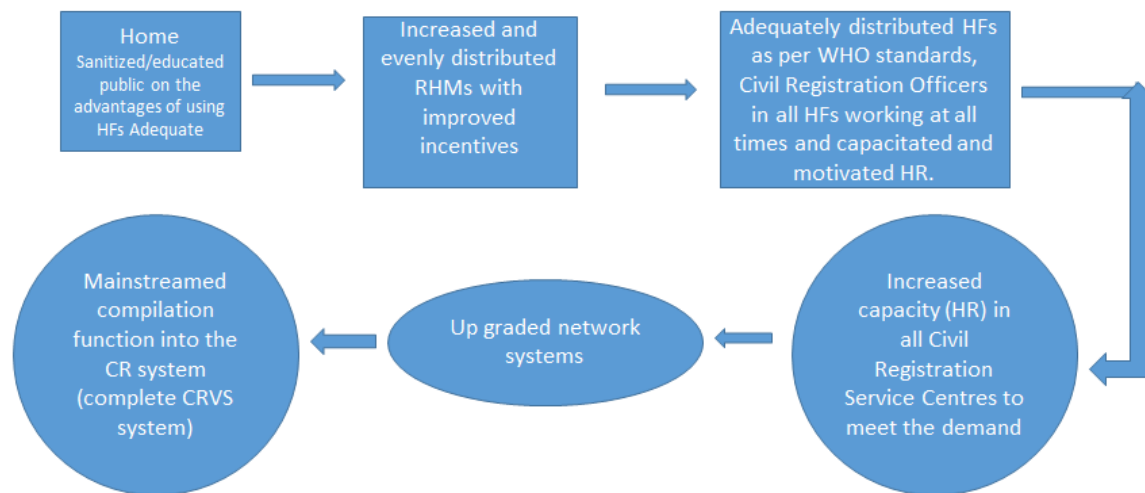
Births at home

<u>Swaziland</u>

309.   The representatives of Swaziland presented the current business process for registering births at home from their occurrence to data compilation thereof. Births are attended by rural health motivators (Bagcugcuteli) who direct parents and child to a health facility for immunization. Health facilities issue a birth notification which is taken by parents to the civil registration service centre. There, registration takes place, information is captured and forms are stored. Information goes to the computer services department of the Civil Registrar, where it is stored and archived. Data is then forwarded to the Central Statistical Office for compilation.

310.   The major bottlenecks in the current process were identified as follows: rural health motivators are not easily accessible because of the volume of work and the area of coverage; there are significant transportation challenges, means of transportation are limited, carry a cost and are not suitable; health facilities not evenly distributed in the country, so there may be a long distance to cover to reach a health facility; not all health facilities have in house birth registration, even where the service is provided it is on part-time basis; long distances from health facilities and civil registration service centres; poor reception and service towards the births occurring outside hospitals; insufficient human resource at the civil registration service centres; inconsistence of the network; and the adhoc compilation of civil registration data by the Central Statistical Office to produce vital statistics.

311.   Based on this analysis, the representatives of Swaziland concluded that the business process did not need major modification. However, there are important changes along the way of the business process were detailed. First, homes need to be sanitized in order to house a birth, and public must be educated on the advantages of using health facilities during pregnancy and child delivery. Second, the number of rural health motivators needs to increase to improve the clients ratio, they must be evenly distributed, and should receive improved incentives, engaging them on specified contracts. Third, health facilities must be adequately distributed as per WHO standards, their capacity in terms of ambulances and human resource needs to be improved; civil registration officers must be implanted in all health facilities working at all times; further human resources need to be capacitated, motivated and enough to meet the demand. A restructure of the Civil Registration Department may be needed. Fourth, network systems must be upgraded. Fifth, a mainstreamed compilation function built into the civil registration system is necessary to complete the civil registration and vital statistics system. This point refers to having a statistical unit within the Civil Registration Department.

312.   Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for births at home in Swaziland.
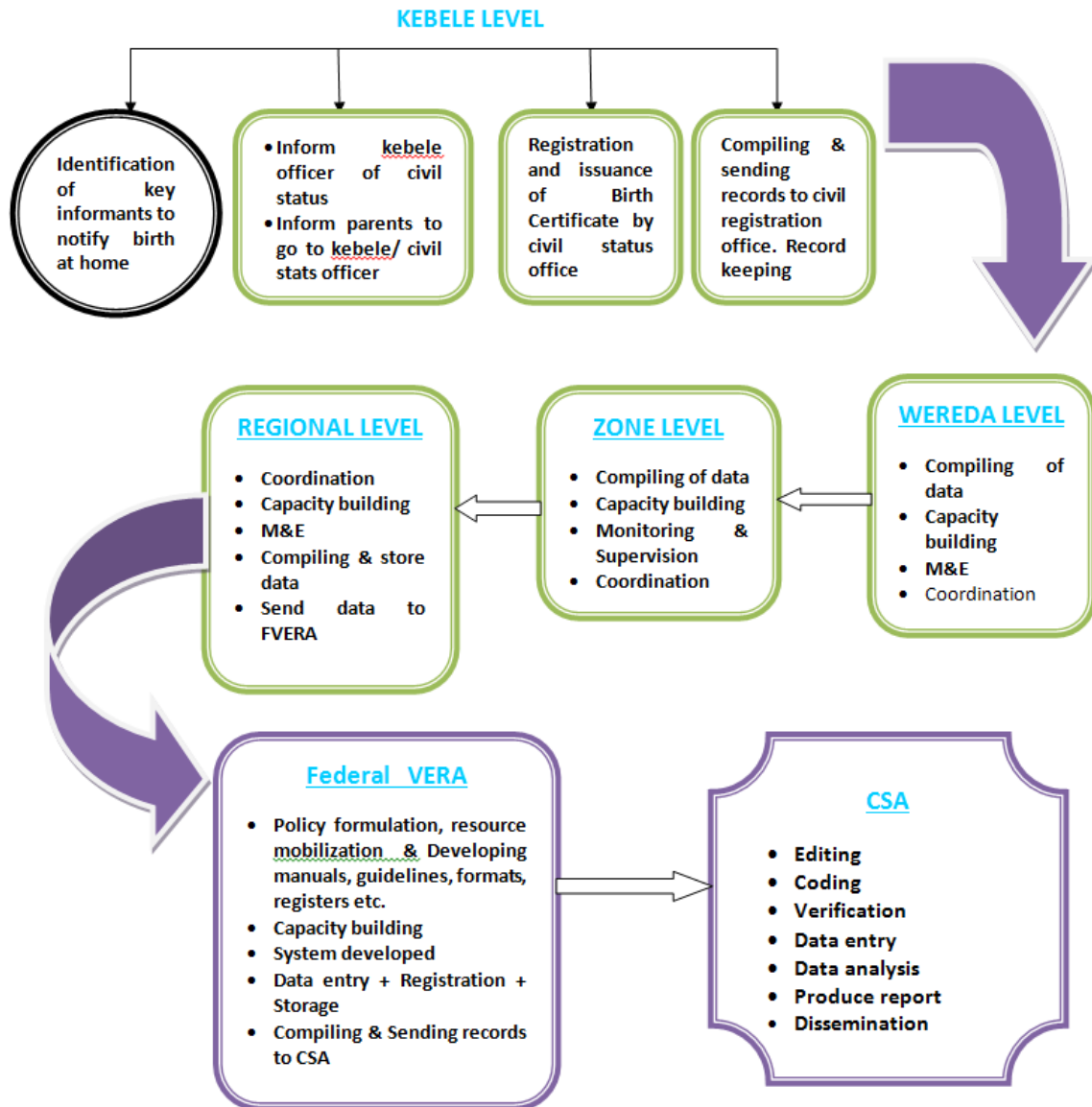

Ethiopia

313.   The representatives of Ethiopia presented their country case for the business process to register births at home. As the Vital Events Registration Agency is in its early stages, this process flow has been drawn fairly recently. At the lowest (kebele) level, key informants in the community need to be identified. These informants must notify the relevant kebele officer of civil status and advise parents to go to the kebele civil status office, where registration takes place and birth certificate is issued. The kebele office is responsible for compiling and sending records to the district civil registration office (wereda); they are also accountable for record keeping. At the wereda level, the office's functions include compiling data from the relevant kebeles, carry out capacity building activities, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination within the district. At the zone level, the office's functions are the same as the wereda office, but at a higher level, comprising several weredas. At the regional level, the office is responsible for coordination, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, compiling and storing of data, as well as for sending data to the federal Vital Events Registration Agency.

314.   The federal agency is charged with policy formulation; resource mobilization; developing manuals, guidelines and formats; capacity building; developing the system for data entry, registration and storage; maintaining registers; and compiling and sending records to the Central Statistical Agency. Finally, personnel from the Central Statistical Agency edit, code and verify the data. If needed, additional data are entered from other sources. Data are analysed and a report is produced for dissemination.

315.   The representatives of Ethiopia outlined five strategies to improve the efficiency of the process. First, they highlighted that coordination and collaboration are vital both at the federal and regional level. Board Management and Council of Vital Events must be in

sync. Second, a communication strategy to conduct awareness creation needs to be developed, including a social mobilisation strategy and information, education and communication materials in local language. Third, the law requires amendments on confidentiality and duplication of efforts. Fourth, a significant capacity building effort is necessary in term of human resource training, supplies and equipment, and information technology. Fifth, standard guidelines, manuals, formats and registers must be swiftly developed and readily available for use at all levels.

316.   Below is a diagram displaying the business process for births at home in Ethiopia.

KEBELE LEVEL

Identification of key informants to notify birth at home

- Inform kebele officer of civil status
- Inform parents to go to kebele/ civil stats officer

Registration and issuance of Birth Certificate by civil status office

Compiling & sending records to civil registration office. Record keeping

WEREDA LEVEL

- Compiling of data
- Capacity building
- M&E
- Coordination

ZONE LEVEL

- Compiling of data
- Capacity building
- Monitoring & Supervision
- Coordination

REGIONAL LEVEL

- Coordination
- Capacity building
- M&E
- Compiling & store data
- Send data to FVERA

Federal VERA

- Policy formulation, resource mobilization & Developing manuals, guidelines, formats, registers etc.
- Capacity building
- System developed
- Data entry + Registration + Storage
- Compiling & Sending records to CSA

CSA

- Editing
- Coding
- Verification
- Data entry
- Data analysis
- Produce report
- Dissemination

<u>Lesotho</u>

317.   The representative of Lesotho delivered the results of his work according to the assignment given. He began with the process flow for a birth occurring at home. Informants, normally the parents, report the birth to the area Chief, who registers the birth and issues a notification letter addressed to the district registrar. Within a year, informants must submit this notification letter to the district registrar, attaching identification documents of both parents, marriage certificate where applicable, and health card or baptismal certificate. The district registrar performs the civil registration of the birth and issues the birth certificate. Currently, there is no transmission of information to the Bureau of Statistics, and no cooperation for the collection of vital statistics is in place.

318.   The main bottlenecks in the current process were identified. The period between reporting the event to the local authority and the actual registration, one year, is too long. Informants must travel long distances in order to register the event, which causes them to incur in huge transportation and related expenses; thus, rendering the cost of registration high.

319.   Based on this analysis, the representative of Lesotho concluded that the major change to the business process is to establish registration offices at health institutions. Therefore, the desired business process is as follows: after the event occurs at home, it is reported to the area chief or the local authority, who registers the birth and issues a notification letter addressed to the district registrar. Informants submit this letter either at a health institution or at the regional civil registration office, attaching identification documents of both parents, marriage certificate where applicable, and health card or baptismal certificate. Finally, under the desired process, these registration offices would send data to the Bureau of Statistics for compilation of vital statistics.

320.   Coupled with this, the representative of Lesotho formulated a number of strategies to adopt in order to accomplish the desired business process. First, it is essential that the law be reviewed and amended to ensure that registration is done within three months. In addition, pertinent consultations with the Ministry of Health are needed to enable the deployment of relevant resources to all health centres, including clinics. To support this structure, the establishment of regional and satellite offices is needed. Lastly, a closer relationship with the Bureau of Statistics is urgently needed.

321.   Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for births at home in Lesotho.
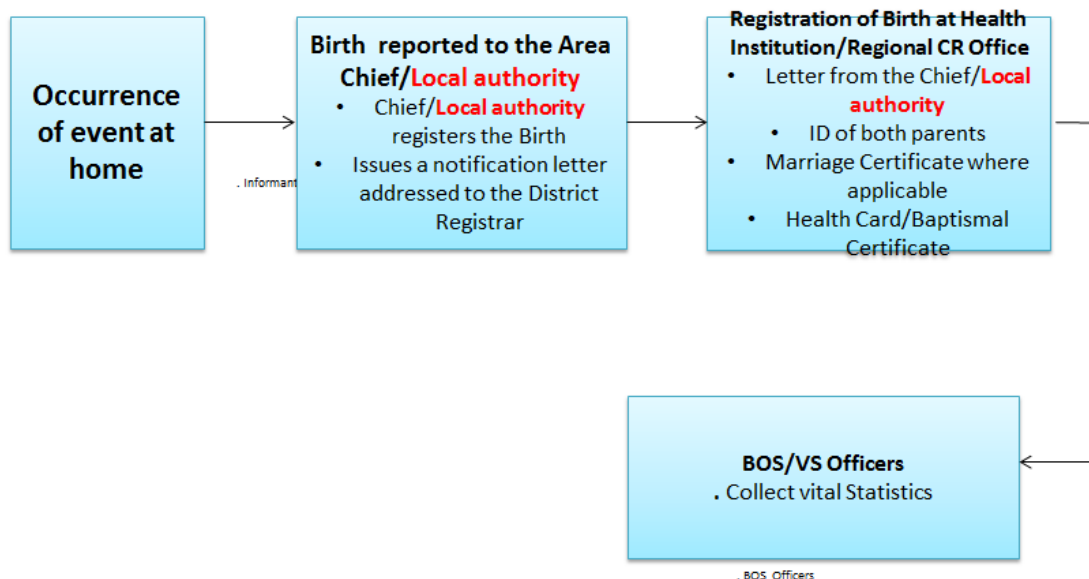
322.   After the country presentations on births at home, UNECA and UNSD made their feedback interventions. A representative of UNECA advised that, to improve coverage, the first issue to solve is accessibility; the distance to be travelled to get to the registrar's office cannot be too long. The health sector has set a good example; there is high immunization coverage in most countries. This represents an opportunity for civil registration, taking advantage of immunization at health facilities for improving registration. Vaccines need to be given within 1-3 months from birth, so kids can be registered when they come for vaccines.

323.   UNECA also refer to paper copies of registration records; the number of paper copies must be kept to a minimum. The practice of Ethiopia, where four paper copies are being planned for is not feasible, storing will be a problem. It was advised to shift more into electronic copies.

324.   A representative of UNSD observed that the birth certificate is only required at the tertiary level of education in Lesotho. He recommended revising the law so that it is required to enter primary or preschool, this measure will improve delayed registration dramatically.

Births in health institutions

Ghana

325.   The representatives of Ghana delivered a presentation according to the assignment given. They walked the audience through the current business process for the registration of births occurring in institutions. Local registries are located in hospital, clinics and maternity homes where information received from parent is processed and a birth certificate is issued. Alternatively, registration and issuing of birth certificate can also be

done at local registration offices outside medical facilities (Metro, Municipal or District Office). In any case, it is worth noting that registration of birth is done as and when mother comes for postnatal care and after child is named.

326. Local registrars submit data to district registrars, who forward it to regional offices. All ten regions submit their information to the central registry, where data is saved into the national database and statistics are compiled thereof. Finally, the central registry submits the statistics to the Ghana Statistical Service.

327. According to the presenters, the major bottlenecks in the process flow for births occurring at health institution in Ghana are: most registrations cannot be done at birth due to the fact that child has not been named; the legal framework does not compel health institutions to register births immediately after the event occurs; there is lack of infrastructure; and there is low political commitment.

328. In order to address these bottle necks, the representatives of Ghana proposed a re-designed business process, which mainly contemplated a nationwide intercommunicated system capturing events in real time. In the desired process, there are registration facilities in hospitals, clinics and maternity homes that register events immediately as they occur. As information is captured at the health facility, it is automatically received by the central registry, the regional registry and the relevant local registration office (Metro, Municipal or District). This would enable monitoring of the volume of events occurred at all geographical levels by the end of the day. Ultimately, al stakeholder agencies such as the Ghana Statistical Service, the National Identification Authority, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority, and the Electoral Commission among others, can access information from the Central Registry.

329. To complement the proposed modifications to the process flow, the representatives of Ghana put forward several strategies. First and foremost, an automated system when put in place will help register events immediately as they occur. Coupled with this, a revision of the legal framework is necessary to mandate health institutions to capture events as soon as they occur. Additionally, the revised legal framework should commit the government to provide funding for the establishment and maintenance of the system. Finally, adequate provision of infrastructure is of great importance to facilitate registration.

330. Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for births at health facilities in Ghana.
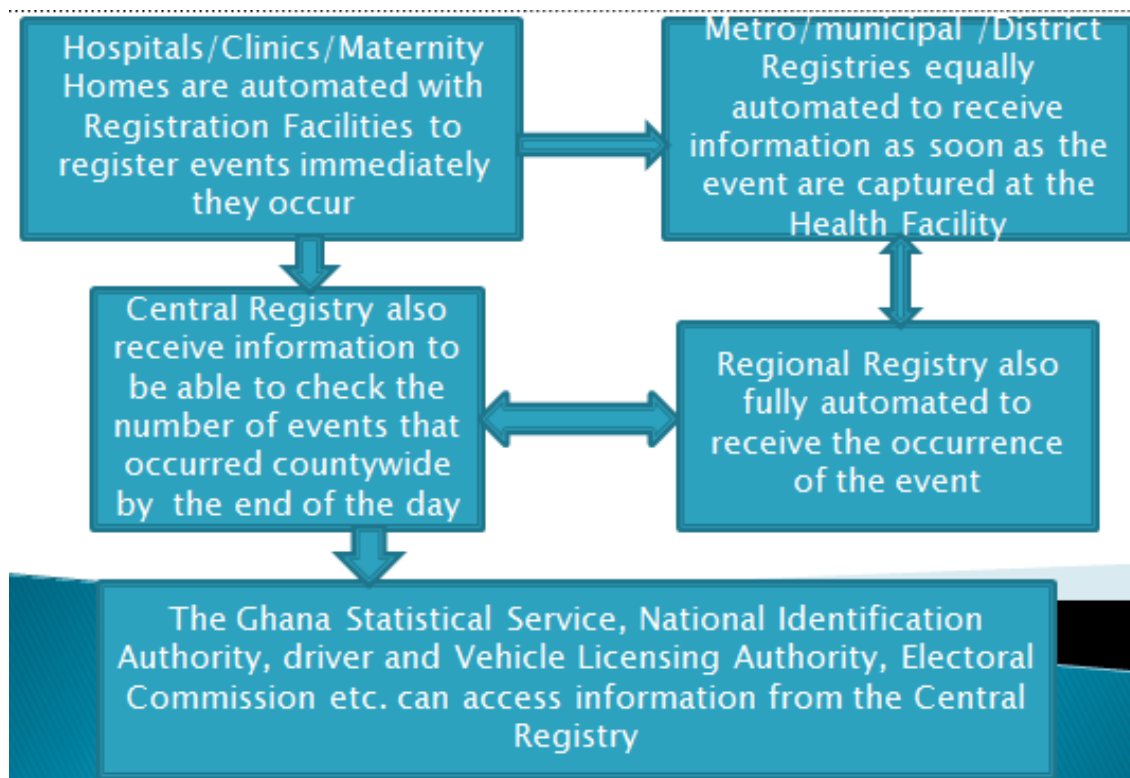
Uganda

331. The representatives of Uganda prepared a presentation on strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics, elaborating on the particular case of births at health institutions. Health institutions include government, missionary and industrial hospitals, as well as health centre IVs (health facilities at the lowest level providing promotive, preventive and curative services including emergency surgical and obstetric services). Private hospitals are not included as they are not registration districts under the Births and Deaths Registration Act of Uganda. As per the assignment, the presenters considered the current birth registration business process. After the live birth occurs, the ward supervisor or whoever in charge of the maternity ward notifies the record unit, where pertinent information is entered on a daily basis. Data is electronically uploaded on the Mobile Vital Records System and is instantly transmitted to the Uganda Registration Services Bureau database. If all information has been submitted, the short birth certificate is issued by the hospital administrator, whereas the long birth certificate is issued by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau upon demand by interested persons.

332. The most significant bottlenecks in the current process were pointed out. There is a lack of policy for birth and death registration, as well as of political support; birth registration is not a priority. There are financial constraints. The internet supply is unstable, which affects the Mobile Vital Records System. Because of cultural hindrances, there are numerous incomplete registrations due to lack of name of the child. There is lack of awareness both by the public and notifiers. There are direct and indirect costs

involved in institutional births (materials, transport), coupled with high costs involved in obtaining a long birth certificate. The services offered by the Registrar General are centralized. Hospitals are not directly accountable to the Registrar General. The birth registration data from institutional births is not representative of the entire country. There is high turnover of the ward notifiers and data entrants. The existing manual records are not synchronized with the birth registration data uploaded using the Mobile Vital Records System. The laws governing the registration of vital events are archaic.

333.   Based on this analysis, the representatives of Uganda drew their desired birth registration business process. The key modification to the flow resides in the ability of the health facilities to issue long birth certificates. Under the desired model, the ward supervisor notifies the occurrence of birth; data on the birth is electronically uploaded on the Mobile Vital Records System and is instantly transmitted to the Uganda Registration Services Bureau database. The hospital administrator issues the long birth certificate. Birth registration data is transmitted from the Registration Services Bureau to the Bureau of Statistics, where it is used to inform vital statistics.

334.   To finalise their presentation, the representatives of Uganda offered a number of strategies that would help reach the desired process flow. Sensitization and awareness campaigns of wide scope, as well as advocacy for resource mobilization are critical. A law reform is needed, followed by speedy efforts to develop a policy for birth and death registration, together with a comprehensive civil registration strategic plan. Furthermore, birth and death registration should be labeled a key result area for the government and should be part of the performance appraisal for the duty bearers at all levels. Finally, the presenters set forth that decentralization of services would help improve coverage and quality.

335.   Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for births at health facilities in Uganda.

Live Birth occurs → Ward Supervisor notifies of occurrence of birth → Data on births is electronically uploaded on MVRS and instantly transmitted to URSB database ↓ Long birth certificate issued by Hospital Administrator ← Birth registration data is transmitted to by URSB to UBOS ← Birth registration data used to inform vital statistics
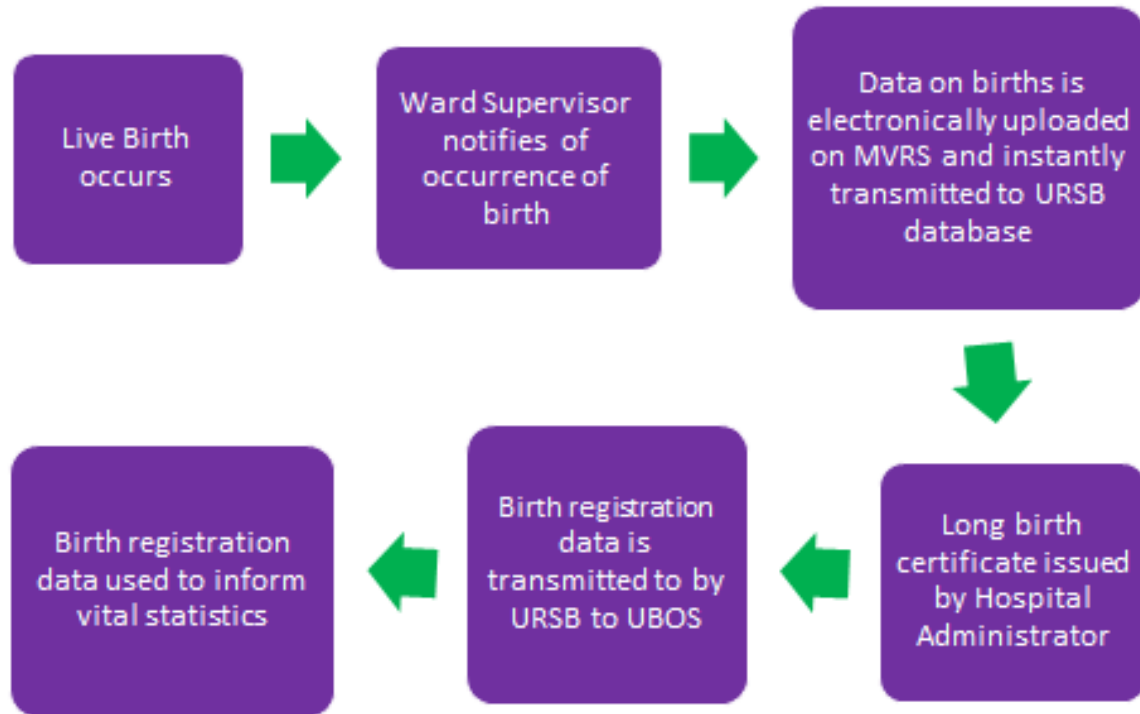
Gambia

336. The representatives of Gambia elaborated first on births and deaths registration in general; afterwards, they presented the analysis of the business process for births in health facilities.

337. In Gambia, registration is legal and mandatory; civil registration is decentralised and integrated into the services of the Reproductive and Child Health Unit of the Ministry of Health. There are 48 basic health facilities and 232 out-reach stations. The Reproductive and Child Health Unit attracts 90% of pregnant women and children for immunisation services. The goal of a decentralized structure and the integration of registration services into those of health are to register 90% of children receiving immunization, to get registration closer to the communities, and to cut on costs.

338. The business process for births taking place at maternity wards was described. Following the birth, mother and child are discharged if conditions of both are satisfactory. After one week, the baby is given a name in a traditional ceremony. Mother and child attend reproductive and child health clinics for immunisation on a monthly basis. On the first visit for immunisation, the child is issued an infant welfare card which contains the topics for registration; the child is registered at the clinic. Data on birth registration is sent to the regional health directorate on a monthly basis. Regional health directorates compile data from all health facilities in the region and send it to the Health Management Information System office at central level on a monthly basis; they also send these data to the Birth Registry Office, but on a quarterly basis.

339.   The key bottlenecks in the current process were identified as follows: there is a lack of adequate human resources at clinic level; the waiting times are very long; and the delivery and/or collection of birth certificates are untimely.

340.   The representatives of Gambia considered that the current business process necessitated two crucial improvements. All births should be registered within the first month, and certificates need to be issued on the spot.

341.   To finalise, the Gambian presenters outlined five strategies to improve the process. First, they proposed to increase human resources at the clinic level. Second, they highlighted the importance of devising a mechanism to distribute certificates on time. Third, they advocated for a single register to accommodate both immunisation and birth registration topics. Fourth, they suggested that birth registers feed into the basic health facility register on monthly basis. Fifth, they stressed the need to have the Health Management Information System send birth registration data to the Bureau of Statistics on a quarterly basis.

342.   After the country presentations on births at health facilities, the discussion touched upon topics like registration of abandoned children, and integration of information technology into the business process.

343.   A question was raised in regards to how to handle the birth registration of an abandoned child. In Gambia, abandoned children are registered, and certificate is issued with parents name if available. In Uganda, the law presumes that abandoned children are born where they are found, so they are registered there. Police are notified; they complete the declaration of birth, and therefore give name to these children. In Ghana, abandoned children are sent to social welfare, where an investigation is carried out.

344.   It was noted that a number of countries are facing problems with information technology systems. A general inquiry to UN bodies was launched, as to whether there is some kind of support for these countries. A representative of UNECA pointed out that some technology initiatives are incompatible with an adequate business process, and can actually diminish civil registration and vital statistics. UNECA will publish a manual on information technology in 2015.

345.   Gambia was asked how they perform data accuracy checks, given that data is received quarterly. Another question was asked as to what backup strategy for lost records is in place, as all Gambian records are in paper.

346.   Uganda was asked whether and how district offices receive data from health facilities, given that health facilities send records directly to national office.

347.   It was also mentioned that, for the first time, birth and death registration are mentioned in the national budgets as one of the areas to be strengthen. Participants expressed their expectations to see how this strengthening will be in the coming years.

348.   UNECA provided some feedback, stating that failing to register institutional births is missing a big opportunity, and highlighted that this is mostly due to no naming

children immediately. Moreover, UNECA reminded delegations that there are records in hospitals that remain incomplete because of this, and don't make the transition into registered births. UNECA advised countries to catch mothers when they bring children back to hospitals for immunization.

349.   Furthermore, a representative of UNECA congratulated the good practice of Gambia, where health and civil registration and vital statistics are being integrated to improve coverage.

Deaths at home

Zimbabwe

350.   The representative of Zimbabwe talked about the process followed for registering deaths occurring at home, analyzing the major bottlenecks in the current system and putting forward a revised business process. The registration of deaths is mandatory in Zimbabwe; this area is a big challenge. The law may need to be reviewed to make it an offence not to register a death, unless other corrective measures are put in place to ensure compliance.

351.   The business process was described as follows: after a person dies at home, their relatives inform the village head and obtain a letter confirming the death. Subsequently, the relatives report the death to the police, who makes a visit to assess the nature of death, i.e. whether it was due to suicide, suspected murder, accident or natural causes. The body is taken for autopsy and further investigations.

352.   If the death is due to natural causes, a police clearance report is given to the relatives, the body is buried, and relatives register the death at the nearest registration office. In order to do the death registration, relatives produce the deceased's national identity document, the letter of confirmation from the village head and the clearance letter from the police. The informant's details are recorded, and all three documents are attached to the registration form. The death is captured in the Zimbabwe Population Registration System. The death certificate is printed and handed to the informant, who signs to acknowledge receiving the certificate.

353.   There are a number of bottlenecks identified in this process flow. In general, the whole process is long, as relatives need to first report to the village head and go to the police station more than once, at least to report death and back, and then again to pick up police clearance letter. Then, they have to go register the death. In addition, the distance to the police station maybe far; the police may be short staffed, causing long waiting times both at the station and at home; transportation of the body to and from the police station may be a problem. The burial has to wait for the whole process to be completed. Coupled with these challenges, health officials are not involved in any way during the process, thus no cause of death is given.

354. A simplified business process removing the village head from the flow was proposed. In the desired business process, after the death occurs, relatives report to it directly to the police and obtain police clearance, with which they are able to register the death and bury the body. Registration offices are always situated near a police station.

355. Several strategies were provided in order to improve the process flow for registering births at home. It was suggested to closely review the registration procedure to simplify it and inform all stakeholders of modifications, comprising the conduction of workshops with all registrars to familiarize themselves with the new procedures. The importance of carrying out awareness campaigns through the print and electronic media was also emphasized, including information for traditional leaders (chiefs, village heads), and the production of flyers and pamphlets for distribution.

Tanzania

356. The representative of Tanzania presented on strategies for improving the civil registration and vital statistics system, focusing on the business process for deaths occurring at home. In Tanzania, like in many other developing countries, most citizens have come into this world and left without leaving a trace on official records. The main reason has been weak law and operational framework for compulsory, universal, continuous and permanent recording of vital events in the country. In the absence of a fully-functioning civil registration system, citizens have remained unrecorded and hence unrecognized by the State.

357. A reliable civil registration and vital statistics system is a basic component of good governance. The information collected through the civil registration system allows identifying subsets of the population requiring intervention or services, such as health care, education, social protection, as well as humanitarian response in emergency situations. Eventually, the systematically registered vital events can facilitate access to essential public services that every individual is entitled to enjoy.

358. In Tanzania, civil registration systems are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency being the executive agency under that Ministry is entrusted, among other things, to ensure that all births and deaths occurring in Tanzania mainland are accurately recorded at the earliest opportunity. However, the percentage of registration of deaths occurring at home has remained very low. The sticking problem still remained that registration is yet to reach down to the villages, which is the ultimate level for the registration to become universal in practice. Currently the registration centres are situated at the district headquarters, not lower.

359. Reporting of death information is an important component of the overall civil registration and vital statistics. The majority of developing countries, including Tanzania, lack the appropriate system and mechanism of capturing deaths information. The information on cause of death has an important role to play; in legal, administrative and statistical uses. However, this is still a challenge for deaths occurring at home, as civil

registrars are not experts on the medical field, and the health facilities do not certify deaths upon arrival or deaths at home

360.   The representative of Tanzania walked the audience through the current registration process for deaths at home. In cases where the death was due to unnatural causes, the informant reports it to the nearest ward executive officer, who reports it forward to the police. The body is transported to a health facility for postmortem studies. In cases where the death was due to natural causes, the village executive officer issues an introductory letter to the relative and so does the ward executive officer. Afterwards, for both unnatural and natural causes, the district administrative secretary registers the event, issues the death certificate and sends return to the headquarters of the Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency quarterly. The Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency receives all filled forms and archives them.

361.   It is worth pointing out that deaths outside health facilities of refugees, internally displaced persons and nomads are not recognized by law; deaths occurring abroad are not registered; and there is no collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics and other stakeholders.

362.   According to the business process above, the following are the bottlenecks: registration is centralized; there is lack of awareness by the public; there is no proper procedure of reporting causes of death; traditional and religious norms hinder coverage and quality; the system of registration is manual.

363.   Based on her analysis, the representative of Tanzania proposed a revised registration process for deaths at home. The main modification consisted of locating registration offices at health facilities, and expanding the net of registration offices to the level of ward, rather than the current arrangement which is at district level. She also set forth the vision that will guide all actions and activities of the civil registration functions of the Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency. For improving registration, the agency must ensure that all deaths at home are counted, taking cognizance of the current state of the system.   The mission for improvement of home deaths registration is established in terms of identifying who died and what they died of to safeguard rights of all and inform evidence-based decisions. The mission statement defines the fundamental purpose of registering home deaths, describing why it should be done and what has to be done to achieve the vision of the strategy.

364.   The Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency is striving to achieve full registrations of births and deaths in Tanzania mainland. The institution now has a history of proactive initiatives to improve the registration system with the ultimate objective of reaching down as far as possible to the grassroots of the Tanzania community in the villages and urban areas. The following are the strategies to improve civil registration and vital statistics: to re-look at the law and decentralize registration to the grass root level; to establish an interoperable information and communication technology infrastructure and systems; and to invest in multi-sectoral civil registration and vital statistics skills and capabilities, including research and training on use of verbal autopsy. Additionally, it is critical to establish collaboration and coordination mechanisms with

other civil registration departments and the National Bureau of Statistics, as well as to roll out new roles and responsibilities for civil registration and vital statistics management. Lastly, the representative of Tanzania suggested advocating and promoting awareness to the public on the importance of registering deaths occurring at home, and the importance of giving out proper information to help come up with probable cause of death.

365.   Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for deaths at home in Tanzania.
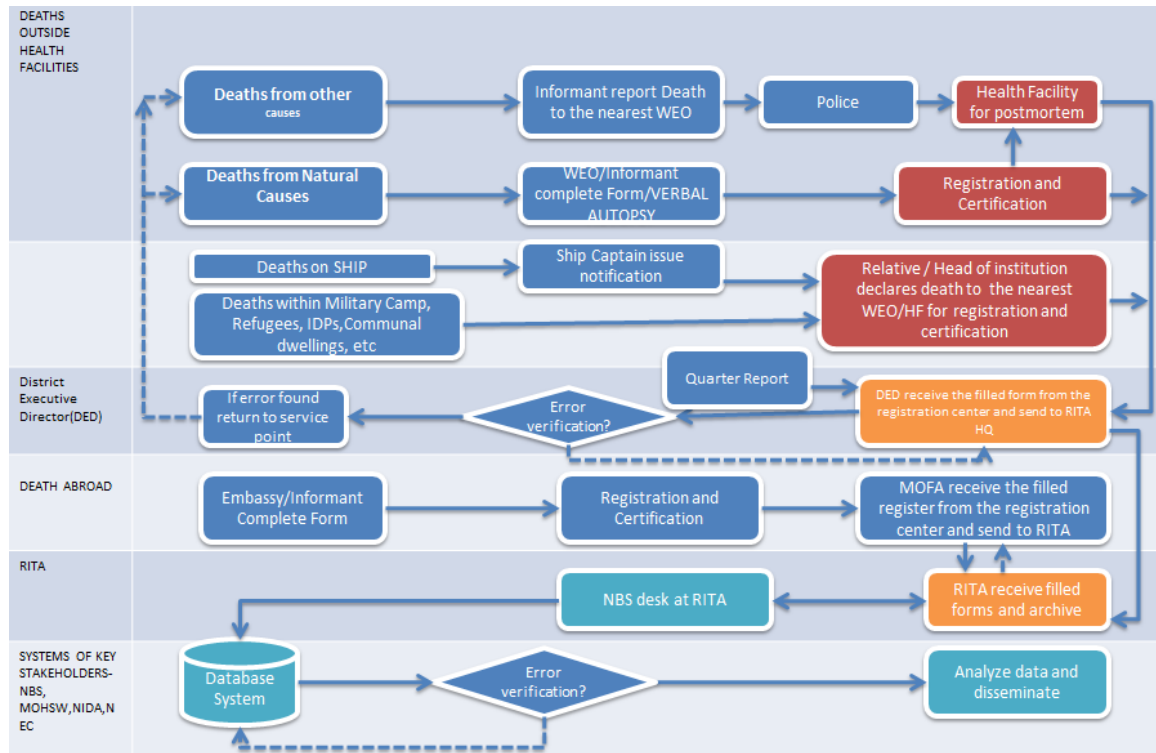
Egypt

366.   The representative of Egypt presented the results of the assignment on the current and desired business process for registering deaths occurring at home. The registration of deaths is governed by the Civil Status Law, promulgated in 1994. The process commences with the notification of death, which has to be done within 24 hours from its occurrence to the health office in the area. This notification is carried out by relatives or neighbors of the deceased presenting two copies of identification documents for themselves and the deceased. Consequently, the health registrar will fill two notification forms of death and the notifier will sign them. The health office doctor goes to see the case at home and assesses whether the death is natural or not. In the former case, the medical doctor gives the burial permit. If there is reason to suspect that the death is not natural, the doctor will notify the police. In any case, the doctor will endorse the two notification forms, noting natural or not natural causes. One of them is kept at the health

office and the other one is sent weekly to the civil status authority. The certificate of death is issued to a first degree relative and if not available, to a second degree relative.

367.   Subsequently, the medical doctor will fill a third notification form belonging to the Ministry of Health, where direct and indirect causes of death are determined, and there are fields about smoking, accidents, tumors, and female deaths at the age of 15 to 49. This form is sent to the information system in the Ministry of Health. The health information system analyses the data and gives it as a soft material to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics every three months for statistical studies and surveys.

368.   It is worth nothing that, currently, in health offices that are automated, a computerized copy of the first form is printed from the system and signed by the notifier and the doctor. This copy is sent together with the ordinary form to the civil status unit on a weekly basis. Computerized and ordinary forms are compared between against each other to monitor accuracy and completeness. It is planned to have ongoing electronic connection between health offices and the civil status authority; when that stage is reached there will be no need to print out the computerized copy. In Egypt there is a good follow-up of the manual system of registration and the automated system at the level of governorates, districts and health units. Guidelines were designed for use in governorates using the automated system, describing the responsibilities of each member in the system including the follow-up team. Guidelines also contain the major problems and how to deal with them, either software or hardware problems. Follow-up of the registration process can also be done centrally through USB modem.

369.   There are two major challenges in the current business process. First, there is incompleteness and inaccuracy of the direct and indirect causes of death. Second, the automation of the system has been implemented only in eight out of 27 governorates in Egypt. Therefore the desired business process is, to a fair degree, the same as the current one, but accomplishing complete automation of all health offices. It is also vital to hold regular continuous training for health officers, medical doctors and health registrars.

370.   The representative of Egypt formulated five strategies to address the identified challenges. First, automation of the process in all governorates. Second, electronic connection between health offices and civil status authority. Third, continuous training for health officers and medical doctors on ICD 10 and verbal autopsy, as well as training of registrars at health offices. Fourth, include training on ICD 10 in the curricula of medical students. Fifth, continue and enhance assessment exercises and follow-up.

Namibia

371.   The representatives of Namibia delivered a presentation on the registration process for deaths occurring at home. They began describing the current business process. It starts with the family or headmen reporting the death to the police, who takes the body to the mortuary. A police report is issued to relatives, stating that the cause of death is under investigation. Subsequently, the relatives take this report to the mortuary to get it stamped, and the post-mortem study is conducted. At the same time, relatives fill in

a form at the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, attaching the police report. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration captures the relevant information in the National Population Registration System and issues the death certificate. If the death was due to an unnatural cause, cause of death is submitted by the police when it becomes available, and is captured in the National Population Registration System.

372.   While most cases are reported to the police, and the police take the responsibility to bring the body to the mortuary, here are cases where the death is only reported after the burial. In those cases, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration only registers the event if there is substantial proof that it occurred. Some people report the death only when they are in need of the death certificate.

373.   The representatives of Namibia identified a number of bottlenecks hindering the process. On the logistics side, long distances are compounded by a general lack of understanding of public of the importance of death registration. Some regions do not have mortuaries, so police need to transport the bodies to other regions; in addition, not all mortuaries have doctors. There is a problem of accessibility, population in hard to reach areas have long distances to reach health and police services. On the institutional side, the police often do not return the form with cause of the death to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. Coupled with this, vital statistics are neither compiled nor transmitted to the Statistics Agency.

374.   When presenting the desired business process, the delegates of Namibia stressed the importance of strengthening awareness amongst the public, and included a mechanism for mobile notification and for data transmission to the National Statistics Agency. Thus, the revised process flow begins with aware public and headmen, who report the death via a mobile system. The police pick up the body, issue a report, and either them or the relatives take the report to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration to get it stamped. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration captures the relevant information in the National Population Registration System and issues the death certificate. For deaths with an unnatural cause, unlike the current process, the desired process allows for direct electronic submission of cause of death by the police. Finally, raw data is transmitted to the Statistics Agency for compilation of statistics.

375.   A number of strategies were proposed to improve the registration process of deaths occurring at home and to achieve the desired business process. The representatives of Namibia recommended holding consultations with headmen, enhancing community awareness, and informing undertakers that no coffin or funeral services must be provided unless there is a death certificate. Expansion of registration offices and health infrastructure (information and communication technology, roads, mortuaries) was also highly recommended, together with recruitment and training of doctors and police. Regarding coordination, an agreement with the police to integrate information and communication technology systems is needed, as well as the finalisation of the memorandum of understanding between to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration and the National Statistics Agency on transmission of data through interface for timely vital statistics.

376.   Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for deaths at home in Namibia.
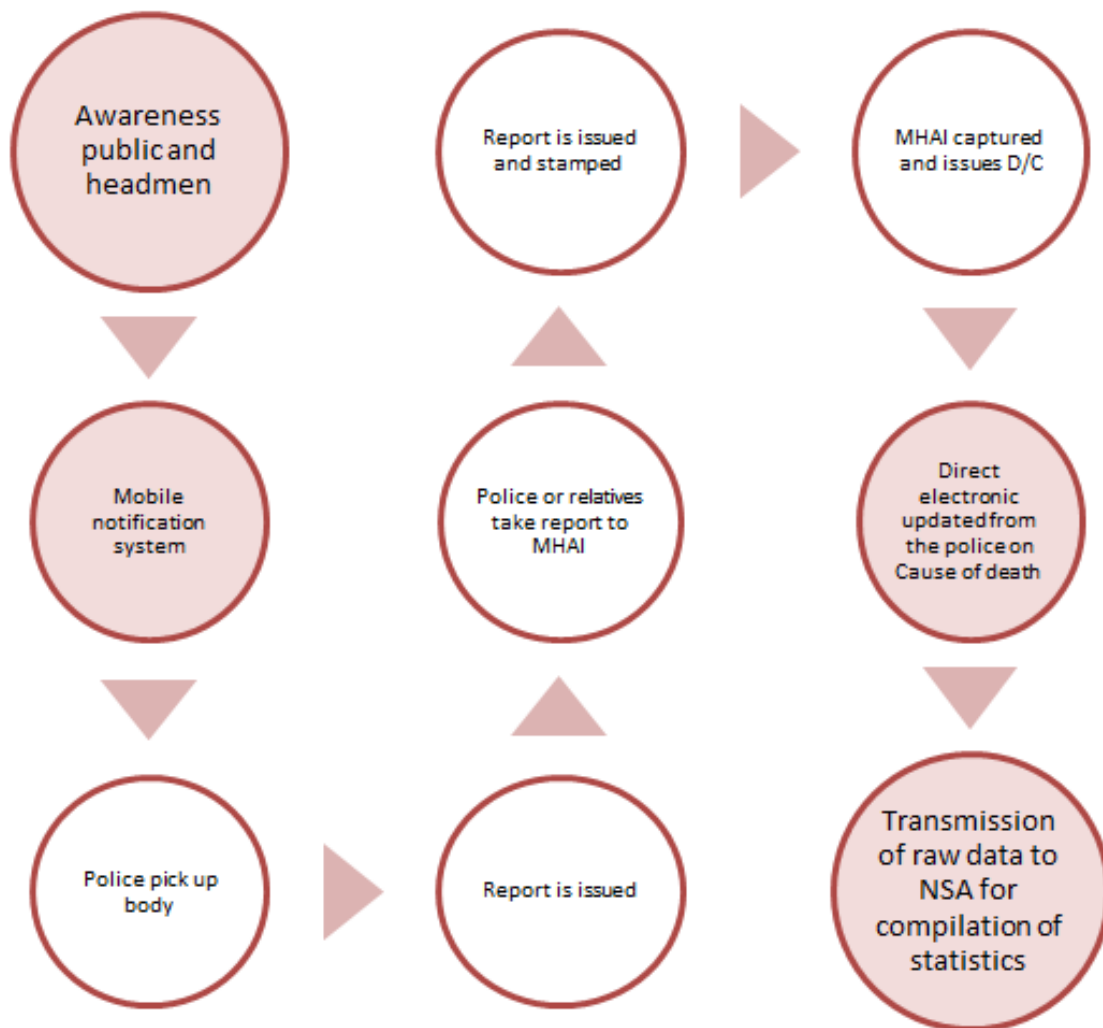
377.   After the country presentations on deaths at home, delegations discussed on the role of headmen, the registration of foreign nationals and cause of death certification. A question was raised in regards to who actually has the responsibility of declaring a death in Namibia. As per the process presented, it is unclear, it could be the police, as they remove the body from home, it could also be the doctor, as they receive the body in the mortuary. A representative of Namibia clarified that the police are not allowed to declare a death; it is supposed to be the doctor at the mortuary irrespective of whether death was caused by unnatural or natural circumstances. However, there is a problem that not all mortuaries have doctors to perform the post-mortem study, so bodies have to be transported long distances. Also, police do not have enough transportation.

378.   Another question touched upon the role of headmen, and whether it is designated on the law. There could be challenges as to how to hold them accountable if they do not report the event. In Zimbabwe, for instance, village chiefs are responsible for reporting

deaths. A representative of UNECA stated that the process for death registration is completely different from that of birth. For registering deaths occurring at home, village chiefs are the best option. In urban areas, deaths can be caught in burial.

379. There was also a query on how are deaths of foreigners dealt with. In Tanzania, deaths of foreigners are not registered.

380. Participants discussed the issue of natural deaths occurring at home when no doctor was involved. In most cases, there is no data on cause of death. Actually, in Tanzania, medical doctors do not undergo post-mortem studies of persons that died before reaching the hospital, upon arrival or died at home.

381. A delegate noted that there are too many layers in the process of registering a death that occurred at home in the cases of Tanzania and Uganda. She stressed that it will be difficult for people to go through these layers in times of sorrow. Re-engineering of the process is needed, and local registrars need to be empowered to take certain key decisions. Tanzania explained that efforts are being done to go from the district level to the wart level. However, currently, by law, registration is done at the district level.

Deaths in health institutions, including causes of death

Botswana

382. The representatives of Botswana analyzed the business process for registering deaths occurring in health facilities, as requested in the assignment. The process starts when a death occurs in a health facility or is attended by medical personnel; the medical worker produces a medical report of the death, accompanied by medical certified cause of death. Subsequently, notifiers submit these documents at the local registration office or service point where the death is registered and data are entered. At the same time, death registration services issues the death certificate. Cause of death is coded at the central level after data have been entered. Finally, data are analysed for report production. Three reports are produced based on civil registration data, namely Causes of Death Report, Vital Statistics Report, and Marriage Statistics Report.

383. The bottlenecks in the current process consist mainly of a limited understanding of the ICD by doctors and coders, coupled with centralised coding. In addition, there are staffing constraints that lead to the eventual use of temporary staff, which delays production of reports.

384. The representatives of Botswana outlined five strategies to improve the efficiency of the process, mostly in the view of strengthening the work on cause of death. First, they highlighted that it is necessary to decentralise coding of cause of death to major health centres. Second, a simplification or domestication of the ICD to country circumstances is needed. Third, it is imperative to intensify training of relevant staff on the ICD. Fourth, an increase of staffing for coding cannot be overlooked. Fifth, the presenters underscored

the importance of strengthening partnerships with development partners to provide technical assistance.

385.   Based on the analysis done, the representatives of Botswana concluded that the current process is the desired. However, there is need to address the above bottlenecks to make it work properly. Below is a diagram displaying the business process for deaths in health institutions in Botswana.
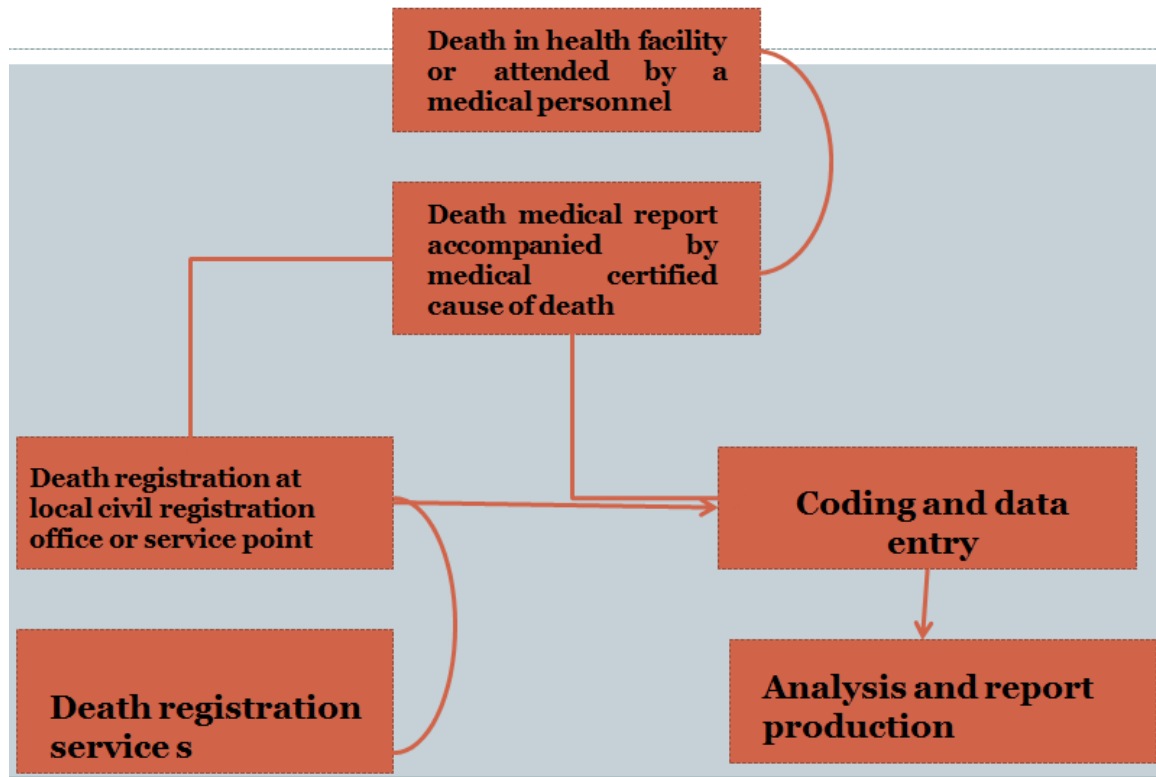
Zambia

386.   The representatives of Zambia delivered a presentation on their strategies for improving the civil registration and vital statistics system regarding institutional deaths. In the current business process, there is more than one form to fill out for a single death event. One used for medical certification which includes cause of death and is given to relatives as a base for burial license to be obtained from local authorities; and another form used as death notification. Family members are responsible for death registration according to law, and there is a punishment (prison) for compliance failure. However, the law is not enforced.

387.   The current procedure starts when a death occurs in a health facility, where a medical officer produces a medical certificate of the cause of death and a notification form. Relatives submit these documents to the district local registrar, who register the

event and forward the information to the Registrar General (in the Ministry of Home Affairs), who is charged with issuing death certificate.

388.   A number of bottlenecks in the current business process were identified. The medical personnel are not trained on cause of death certification; there is no ICD 10 coding; there are two forms used for death certification; deaths occurring in rural health facilities are left out; there is no monitoring mechanism in place; and there are no publications on deaths from civil registration data produced by the Central Statistical Office.

389.   In order to address the main bottlenecks, the representatives of Zambia proposed several strategies. Concerning cause of death, they highlighted that doctors and certifiers need training, in particular on ICD 10 coding. Furthermore, they proposed combining the two forms currently used for death registration, as well as putting a monitoring mechanism in place. Touching upon national coordination, the presenters noted that the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Statistical Office must work together in order to improve quality and coverage. Coupled with this, the Statistical Office should publish death and causes of death statistics using civil registration data.

390.   Accordingly, the desired process for the notification, certification and registration of deaths that occur in health facilities should take due account of the need for coding causes of death and sharing information with the Central Statistical Office. Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for deaths in health institutions in Zambia.
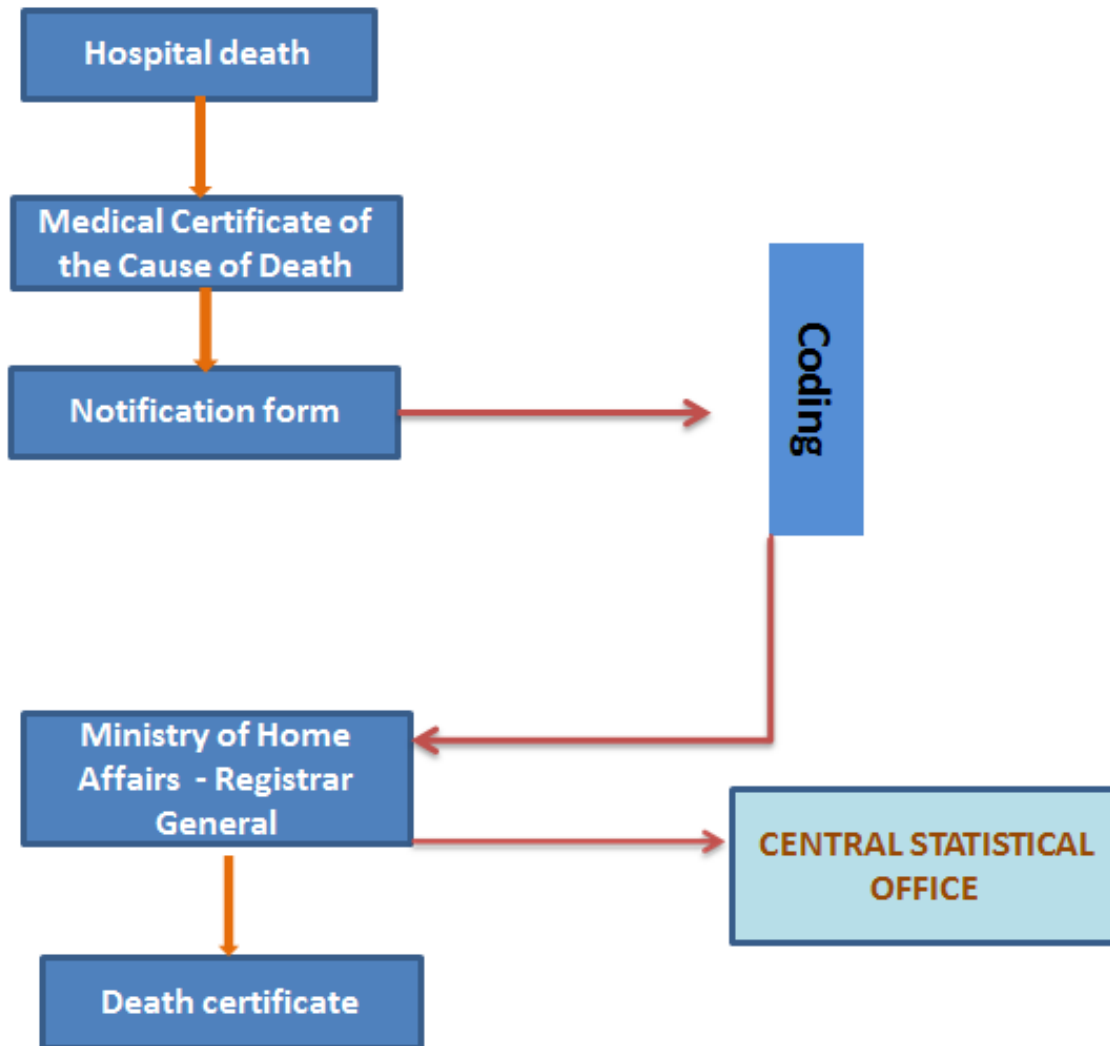
Nigeria

391.   The representative of Nigeria presented the current and desired business process for the registration of deaths, focusing on challenges and improvement strategies. Registration of vital events is provided an act promulgated in 1992, which sets the office of the Registrar General at the apex of registration. The Registrar General issues general directives regarding registration of births and deaths, and co-ordinates and unifies the activities of all registration officials. At the state level, there are 37 chief registrars responsible for overseeing registration activities. At the local government level, there are 774 deputy chief registrars responsible for implementation of the Act. In total, there are 2,773 local registrars in all the registration centres with the responsibility of registering all deaths.

392.   Under the current business process for registering deaths occurring in health facilities, medical officers issue a notification of death which is submitted by relatives to

the local registrar. The major bottlenecks to registration of death at health facilities were outlined as follows: general apathy towards reporting death event; cost of death certificate; inadequate number of registration centres, given the huge land mass of Nigeria (992 sq. km.); customs and traditions regarding death, especially in reporting still-birth; inadequate knowledge of medical specialist to ascertain cause of death.

393.   To finalise, the Nigerian presenter outlined five strategies to improve the process. First, he suggested conducting advocacy through the media and other medium to enlighten the general people on the importance of death registration. Second, he proposed state-level and local government-level training plans for personnel in the registration centres. Third, equally important is to provide continuous capacity building for specialised medical personnel to ascertain cause of death. Fourth, it is vital to improve funding for the registration agency. Fifth, coupled with financial resources, employment of professionals in the registration agency is of utmost importance.

394.   After the country presentations on deaths at health facilities, including cause of death, delegations centred their discussion on issues related to coding causes of death. Botswana was asked how they carry out the coding of cause of death. In this regard, a representative of Botswana clarified that, as part of a coordination mechanism, there are two temporary staff members of Ministry of Health posted in the premises of Statistics Botswana; to coordinate the coding of cause of death.

395.   Furthermore, there was great interest in knowing whether and how can the ICD-10 be simplified for coding cause of death. A representative of UNECA acknowledged that indeed the ICD-10 is too large. Therefore, each country should have their own national list, keeping in mind the most relevant diseases to the country. The national list is normally a shorter version that is consistent and coherent with the full ICD-10 list. UNECA added that WHO is working on a recommended shorter list to submit and publish tabulated data.

Marriages

Mozambique

396.   The representative of Mozambique talked about the current business process for the registration of marriages, analysed the key bottlenecks in the process flow and put forward improvement strategies, as requested in the assignment. Civil and religious marriages can take place at conservatories or at wedding palaces, while traditional marriages have their own arrangements. The National Directorate of Registry and Notary registers civil and religious marriages where they take place, while local authorities are charged with traditional marriages registration. The Directorate forwards information to the National Institute of Statistics.

397.   There are two main bottlenecks in the current process. One is the fact that the process is manual; and the other refers to marriage fees. The amount of the fee depends

on the marriage location; celebrating the ceremony in a palace has a higher fee than doing it in a conservatory.

398.   A number of stategies were recommended to improve marriage registration. For instance, a computer system that allows real-time data capturing is instrumental, as is having it integrated with those systems used in other agencies involved in civil registration and vital statistics. Additionally, a clear regulation of the amount payable for celebrating a marriage needs to be in place.

South Africa

399.   The representatives of South Africa delivered a presentation on strategies for improving the civil registration and vital statistics system, concentrating on marriages. In terms of legislation, the registration of marriages takes place within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Marriage Act (promulgated in 1961), the Recognition of Customary Marriage Act (promulgated in 1998), and the Civil Union Act (promulgated in 2006.

400.   Civil marriages take place at a Home Affairs offices; the requirements include filling out the registration form, a letter of no impediment confirming marital status (if foreigner), identity documents of the marital couple and two witnesses, four photographs of the marital couple, and two witnesses must be present.

401.   The recognition of customary marriages requires that the prospective spouses are both above the age of 18 years, both must consent to be married to each other under Customary Law, the marriage must be negotiated and entered into or celebrated in accordance with Customary Law, both parties must submit to the registering officer their identity documents to enable capturing their correct details on to the application form, two representatives, each from one family, and a lobola (bride price or token) letter if available.

402.   Similar to civil marriages, civil unions take place at Home Affairs offices; the requirements comprise filling out the relevant registration form, two witnesses must be present, identity documents of the marital couple and the two witnesses, and four photographs of the marital couple.

403.   In addition, foreign nationals marrying South African citizens must present a valid passport and permit; minors (under 18 years of age) must provide a form of consent filled in by both parents; divorcees need to provide the final Decree of Divorce; widows and widowers need to provide the deceased spouse's Death Certificate; declaration or affidavit confirming marital status in the case of refugees or asylum seekers.

404.   The representatives of South Africa walked the audience through the process of registration of a civil marriage and a civil union between two South African citizens, solemnization and registration of a civil marriage or civil union between a South African citizen and a foreign national, solemnization and registration of a civil marriage and civil union between two foreign nationals, and registration of a customary marriage at district and regional offices.

405.   An analysis of the key challenges, their impact and suggested strategies to address them was explained. One of the challenges mentioned the presenters was that divorce records at magistrate offices are not linked to the Department of Home Affairs systems; rather, the matching process is done manually. This causes delays in registration of divorces, so the system needs to rely on the divorcee to present their documents, even though this is responsibility of the Justice Department. In parallel, the delayed registration of divorces impacts on incorrect number of divorces. In order to get over this challenge, system integration was suggested between the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

406.   Unavailability of records due to manual records keeping and multiple archiving sites was also cited as challenge. This results in delays when confirming client status, status of persons not being updated on the National Population Register, and inaccurate status of persons on the National Population Register. To address this issue, a new electronic document management system needs to be introduced, together with tools that are more oriented towards the clients' needs, such as mobile phones functionalities, and a customer contact center. Centralization and digitization of records was also recommended.

407.   Expanding on current challenges, the presenters mentioned that clients are often not given explanation of marriage types and requirements, causing delays in submission of marriage registers by designated outside marriage officers, and or submission of inadequate supporting documents. This further results in delays in registration of marriages. To offset these difficulties, there were a few suggestions; to conduct trainings for officials and marriage officers; to implement media campaigns and prepare promotion materials; to develop standard operating procedures and frequently asked questions handbook; and to establish stakeholder forums.

408.   There are unregistered marriages due to apartheid legacy, which derives in the issuance of inaccurate status on death certificates, and can impact division of estates. The South African authorities have been carrying out the Lokisa Ditokomane project, which, among other things contemplated the registration of marriages posthumously (only for old customary marriages registration). The Lokisa Ditokomane campaign was aimed at correcting all the mistakes that appear on the enabling documents of all persons who reside within the boundaries of the country. These corrections relate to surnames, names, dates of birth, and marital status including having been declared dead while still alive. The corrections of these mistakes were done without charge to the affected persons.

409.   Finally, the representatives of South Africa touched upon the question of fraudulent marriages. These are related to fraud documents, as well as to delays in getting letters of no impediment or authentication documents from other countries. To tackle this, the presenters suggested closer scrutiny of letters and documents sent by other countries. In addition, a legislation review to increase prison terms to 15 years for submitting fraudulent documents, aligned to immigration laws and naturalization, so that marriage is no longer a path for obtaining citizenship.

Kenya

410.   The representatives of Kenya explained the business process for registering marriages under the Marriage Act, promulgated in 2014. This legislative framework provides for religious, civil and customary marriages. In the case of religious marriages (Christian, Muslim and Hindu), a notification has to be submitted in the prescribed format by the parties intending to marry 21 days before the date of intended marriage celebration. The celebration of the marriage is presided over by a licensed religious leader who issues the certificate of marriage and forwards the returns to the Registrar in order to complete the registration process.

411.   Similar to religious marriages, in the case of civil marriages, a notification has to be submitted in the prescribed format by the parties intending to marry 21 days before the date of intended marriage. The celebration and registration of the marriage is conducted by a marriage officer or registrar, who issues the certificate of marriage and files the marriage record.

412.   In the case of customary marriages, the process occurs at the community level from commencement to conclusion. The marriage should be celebrated in accordance with the customs of one or both of the parties. The notification of marriage must be carried out within three months, by submitting notification form to the registrar

413.   For all three types of marriage, the Registrar of Marriages is in charge of registering the returns from licensed marriage officials and notifications. Archival of marriage records is also a responsibility of the Registrar of Marriages.

414.   As requested in the assignment, the representatives of Kenya identified the major bottlenecks in the current process. They highlighted that it is a centralized system of registration, where even though licensed officers preside over marriage celebrations and issue certificates, actual registration of the event takes place in the Registrar's office at headquarters. Furthermore, there is no provision under the Act for compilation of statistics and, in fact, there is no linkage with other systems especially the National Population Register and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Therefore there is no official statistics of registered marriages and it is difficult to establish family trees in the National Population Register. In addition, the business process is entirely manual, and the registry is paper based.

415.   Consequently, several strategies to address the bottlenecks were charted. The delegates of Kenya considered that the flow would benefit from a decentralization of the entire process of marriage, from notification, celebration to registration. They also recommended amending the Act to include provisions on data compilation and dissemination. This would enable interventions at the policy level and political support for the department to join the national statistical system and the National Population Register, as well as the establishment of electronic linkages between key users of data from the marriage system.

416.   Based on this analysis, the presenters described the recommended flow, taking into account the computerization of the registry and the interlinkages with other

stakeholders in the civil registration and vital statistics system. Below is a diagram displaying the desired business process for marriages in Kenya.
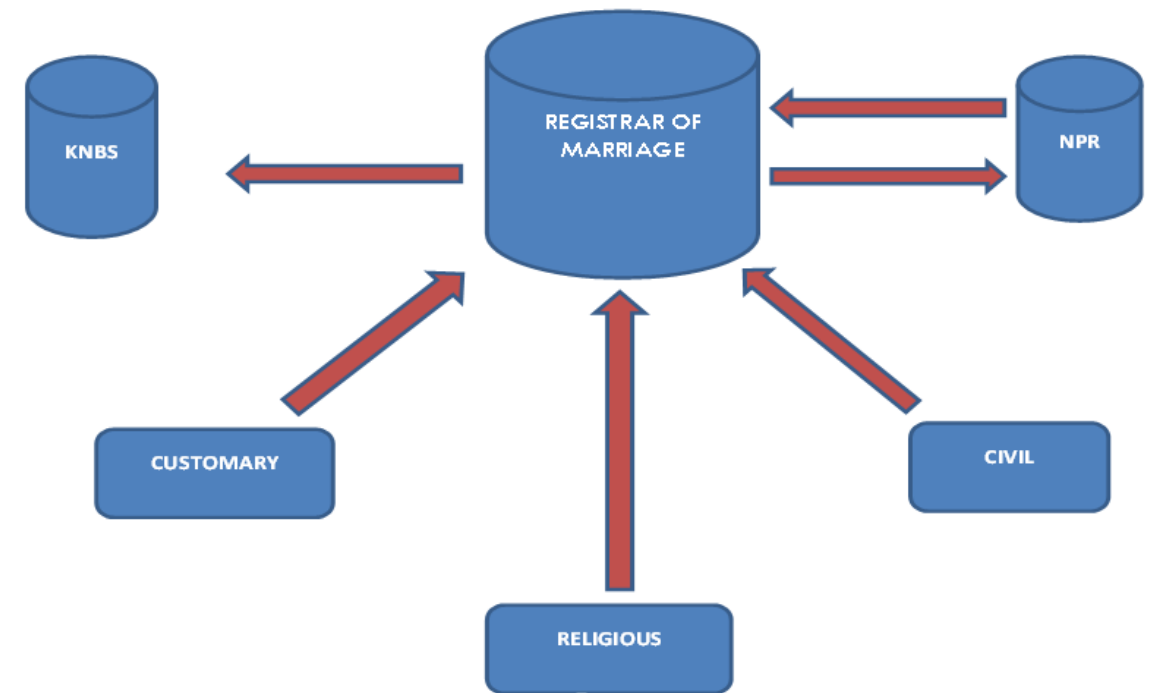
417.   After the country presentations on the business process for registering marriages, participants discussed the advantages and disadvantages of keeping all information in one single marriage register as opposed to having shared fields of information with other registers. Coupled with this, they debated on how to capture marriages of nationals occurring abroad, and the convenience of issuing a marriage certificate.

418.   Regarding the Lokisa Ditokomane project, carried out in South Africa, there was a question on how to deal with cases of unregistered marriages from the past, where couples have only church records, or none. It was responded, that in those cases, the presence of witnesses was required.

419.   Finally, there was a query on how to deal with people that request to get married, but have no identification documents. In the case of South Africa, the representatives clarified that people are required to obtain identity papers before they can get married.

Session 18. Wrap-up / Closing

420.   During the wrap-up session, delegates reviewed the draft Conclusions and Recommendations that the representatives of UNSD had prepared, provided feedback and proposed revisions. After each paragraph was looked at, participants agreed on the changes to be made to the document. UNSD committed to make the agreed changes and circulate the resultant text to participants before posting in on the workshop website.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

421.   The workshop was attended by civil registrars and official statisticians from seventeen English speaking countries, as follows: Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

422.   The participants expressed their appreciation to both the United Nations Statistics Division and the African Centre for Statistics of ECA for a timely organization of this workshop as the latest revision of principles and recommendations for a vital statistics system was just issued by the United Nations Statistics Division and the proximity of the next African Ministerial Conference on civil registration and vital statistics, scheduled for February next year.

423.   As comprehensive as they are, the workshop noted that peculiar circumstances in Africa might necessitate an addendum to the global principles and recommendations in order to reflect those realities. It was therefore concluded that the initiative to develop such an addendum within the overall frame and principles of the global recommendations need to be considered by the ECA, focusing on procedures for registering orphan hood, legal guardianship, storing and retrieval of registration records and ensuring confidentiality of individual information in African circumstances.

424.   The workshop noted the list of recommended core topics for vital events that need to be collected in civil registration and processed in vital statistics. It concluded that each African country should make all the efforts to comply with the international standards as presented in the principles and recommendations and to implement them to the fullest extent possible.

425.   Turning the attention to civil registration as elaborated in the principles and recommendations and the recent developments in Africa, the workshop noted with satisfaction that, since the inception of the African Ministerial Conferences in 2010 a visible progress has been achieved at both national and regional level and that the momentum generated then is going strong. Yet, as evidenced by the national presentations, the state of the art of civil registration and vital statistics is far from homogenous across the region – while in a number of countries the civil registration shows significant improvement, in certain countries it is still on unstable foundations. Consequently, efforts need to be intensified at all different technical and operational planes, primarily through political settings at the highest possible level.

426.   The workshop discussed at length the role of civil registration in the process of certification of the causes of death. It noted the international recommendation that this role consists of ensuring that the certification of the cause of death by a trained medical practitioner is part of the death registration record and as such is transmitted to the statistical office for further processing. Acknowledging that national practices in Africa somewhat differ; the workshop concluded that these practices need to be re-visited and possibly adjusted to comply with the international standards.

427. Similarly, the workshop also noted international recommendations as well as resolution of the First African Ministerial Conference on CRVS regarding the cost of registration – registration should always be free of charge and issuance of the first certificate as well. Acknowledging that national practices vary quite significantly, the workshop concluded that this issue needs to be presented to the national stakeholders and all efforts should be made to comply with international recommendations and African Ministerial Conference resolutions.

428. The participants emphasized the importance of complying with international recommendations in terms of the government obligation to finance civil registration while noting at the same time that this is not the case by far. They concluded that this issue regarding the commitment of the African governments to provide regular, continuous and sufficient financing for civil registration needs to be submitted to the Third Ministerial Conference through appropriate mechanisms.

429. Coordination between institutions responsible for civil registration, vital statistics, public health institutions, home affairs, social services, development partners and a host of other stakeholders remains a contentious issue in a number of African countries. This coordination requires considerable investments in terms of time and all other resources and is thus necessary to bring this issue to the Ministerial Conference through proper channels. This is particularly necessary in terms of synchronizing relevant legislation frameworks – civil registration and official statistics.

430. The workshop concluded that the technical cooperation between countries in the region significantly increased. It also concluded that in order to avoiding pitfalls previously experienced by other countries, this practice should be strengthened and expanded. At the same time, and especially from the point of view of implementing the revised international principles and recommendations, regional institutions, such as ECA, need to consider establishing a pool of experts on different themes that can assist countries.

431. Participants discussed at length the implementation of CRVS assessment tool developed by ECA and implemented in a number of countries participating at this workshop. The tool has been recognized as appropriate and timely, albeit complicated and sometimes repetitive. The workshop concluded that the tool represents a step in the right direction; that it might be improved along the lines of the discussion; and that it needs to be customized for national purposes as "one size does not fill all".

432. Following the presentation outlining considerable gaps in the availability of even the basic demographic statistics for international purposes, the workshop concluded that there needs to be a thorough review of circumstances that result in statistics submitted to the United Nations being limited to the point of non-existing – whether this is due to the lack of national capacity to produce requested statistics or the lack of capacity to report it to the United Nations.

433. Recognizing the critical impact the use of contemporary information and communication technology has in the functioning of civil registration and producing vital

statistics, the workshop noted with satisfaction the efforts of ECA and UNSD in the development of the updated guidelines and handbook for the use of ICT in CRVS and encouraged their release as early as possible. Simultaneously, the workshop noted with concern that across the continent a number of projects are underway in the use of mobile devices for civil registration that might not necessarily follow the international recommendations in terms of registration procedures and collection of topics. In that context, the workshop expressed its expectation that these issues are raised through appropriate channels at the next ministerial conference.

434.   The workshop debated, time and again, the issue of accessibility of civil registration offices and functions in Africa, emphasizing it as a crucial and most critical impediment to the improvement of coverage and effectiveness of civil registration and, consequently, quality and coverage of vital statistics. Acknowledging that accessibility is not an isolated issue, but rather a function of many of the dimensions of civil registration, such as the number and location of local registrars, costs of registration and travel, awareness of the need to register and so forth, the workshop nevertheless pointed to accessibility as one of the major topics for the forthcoming ministerial conference.

Annex 1. List of participants

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Annex 2. Organisation of work

Day 1. Tuesday, 2 December 2014	
8:30–9:00	**1. Registration of participants**

9:00–9:30	**2. Opening**
	Introductory remarks by
	   - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
	   - United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
	Introduction of participants and administrative matters
	Introduction of the programme of work, the methods of work and the literature provided to participants in print and in electronic format.

9:30–10:00	**3. The third revision of the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System.** This session will walk the participants through the origin and development of international standards for civil registration and vital statistics. It will also outline the changes in the current revision compared to the previous ones, and assists the participants in understanding the structure and changes in the publication.
	    • UNSD presentation
	    • General discussion

10:00–10:30	**4. Uses and guiding principles of vital statistics.** The session reviews the importance, main uses and sources of vital statistics, as well as the components of a vital statistics system. This session will focus on international recommendations setting up and running a civil registration system, as well as the necessary coordination and integration within it (Chapters I and II of Part One of the Principles and Recommendations, Rev. 3). • UNSD presentation
10:30–10:50	**Coffee break**
10:50–11:30	**5. Topics and themes to be covered in a vital statistics system.** This session considers topics to be investigated for each vital event, its specific characteristics and the persons directly involved (Chapter III of Part One of the Principles and Recommendations, Rev. 3). • Presentation: Topics from Civil Registration

11:30 – 12:30	**5a.**	**Topics and themes to be covered in a civil registration based vital statistics system (continued). Group discussion:** Which topics are covered by the national CRVS systems compared to international recommendations? Why are these topics important/relevant? Compare the forms used in individual countries with international recommendations, what are the differences What are the topics that represent the most difficult challenge? Why?
12:30 – 14:00		**Lunch break**
14:00 – 14:45	**6.**	**Quality assessment and assurance in the civil registration vital statistics system.** The session reviews the basic quality assurance framework, and techniques, both direct and indirect, that can be used to evaluate the completeness of a civil registration system and reported vital statistics. The session will focus on internationally recommended mechanisms for assuring reliable, accurate and timely vital statistics (Chapter I of Part Three of Principles and Recommendations, Rev 3). - UNSD presentation - General discussion
14:45 – 15:45	**7.**	**Population registers, population censuses and surveys as a source of vital statistics.** The session provides an overview of the use of alternative sources and their potentialities in the context of vital statistics (Chapters III and V of Part Two of Principles and Recommendations, Rev 3). - UNSD presentation - General discussion
15:45–16:05		**Coffee break**
16:05–17:00	**8.**	**The role of health institutions.** The critical role of health institutions in collecting death and cause of death information is examined (Chapter IV of Part Two of the Principles and Recommendations, Rev. 3). - UNSD presentation - WHO presentation (Webex). Certification of causes of death. - General discussion

Day 2. Wednesday, 3 December 2014

9:00- 10:15	**9.**	**Civil registration as a source of vital statistics.** The session examines the method, system, role and other characteristics of civil registration, and defines the vital events that should be registered. It also reviews the registration process for vital statistics purposes (Chapter II of Part Two of Principles and Recommendations, Rev 3). • UNSD presentation • General discussion
10:15- 10:45		**Coffee break**
10:45 – 12:00	**10.**	**National-level designation of responsibilities and organizational structures of a civil registration system.** This session examines the types of structures under which information on the frequency of occurrence of certain vital events and the person(s) concerned with them is collected, stored, retrieved and preserved. It includes the legal framework for civil registration under which the structures can operate efficiently (Module 3 of Chapter I of Handbook on Training in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems). • UNSD presentation • Country presentations (Registrars of Swaziland, Ethiopia, Lesotho and Namibia) • General discussion
12:00 – 13:30		**Lunch break**
13:30 – 14:30	**11.**	**Local-level designation of responsibilities of a civil registration system.** This session looks at the designation and duties of the local registrar. It also considers ways for the central office to improve the efficiency of the local registrar (Module 6 of Chapter I of Handbook on Training in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems). • UNSD presentation • Country presentations (Registrars of Ghana, Uganda, Gambia and South Africa) • General discussion
14:30 – 15:30	**12.**	**Civil registration process: place, time, cost, late registration.** This session considers the place of registration for each type of event and how it should be defined in law and regulation. The session also considers the importance and effect of the time factor in the registration of vital events; how fees should be assessed, relative to the effect they have on the completeness of registration; and it examines the methods of late and delayed registration (Module 8 of Chapter I of Handbook on Training in Civil Registration and Vital

		Statistics Systems).
		• UNSD presentation
		• Country presentations (Registrars of Zimbabwe, Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania)
		• General discussion
15:30 - 15:50		**Coffee break**
15:50- 17:00	13.	**Tools for assessing a civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa.** This session provides a general understanding of a CRVS review, in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the system.
		• UNECA presentation
		• Country experiences on implementation of the assessment tool. Obstacles encountered during the assessment exercise and lessons learned (Registrars of Botswana and Zambia).
Day 3. **Thursday, 4 December 2014**		
9:00 – 10:00	14.	**Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS).** This session highlights the detailed strategies and approaches, progress made and challenges in this regional initiative.
		• UNECA presentation
10:00 – 10:20		**Coffee break**
10:20 – 11:20	14a.	**Experiences of countries in implementation of APAI-CRVS: successes and challenges.** This session will be an open session with countries reflecting on the successes and challenges in implementing the programme in their respective countries.
11:20 – 12:00	15.	**International collection of vital statistics and regional response rates for vital statistics.** The session reviews the data and metadata requirements at international level for vital statistics; it will focus on the description of the system for collecting, processing and disseminating demographic statistics at international level using the United Nations Demographic Yearbook. It will also present the response rates for Africa and compare them with other world regions.
		• UNSD presentation
		• General discussion

12:00 – 13:30		**Lunch break**
13:30- 15:15	**16.**	**Country team work time.** Representative(s) of each country will work as a team on preparing a 10 minute presentation on best strategies to improve civil registration and vital statistics in their respective countries, assisted by resource persons. The presentation will cover the current of various vital events, the new business process planned and the strategies to be adopted to get there. Presentation (template to be provided) will be delivered by each country on the last day of the workshop.
15:15- 15:35		**Coffee break**
15:35- 17:00	**16.**	**Country team work time (continued).**
Day 4. Friday, 5 December 2014		
9:00- 10:30	**17.**	**Strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa.** The session provides a platform for countries to share. Each country (statistician and registrar jointly) will make a presentation on possible national strategies for improving vital statistics in light of the revised set of international principles and recommendations as presented at this workshop. • Country presentations
10:30 – 10:50		**Coffee break**
10:50 – 12:20	**17.**	**Strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa (continued).** • Country presentations
12:20 – 13:50		*Lunch break*
13:50 – 15:20	**17.**	**Strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics system in Africa (continued).** • Country presentations

15:20 – 15:40		*Coffee break*
15:40 – 17:00	**18.**	**Wrap-up /Closing.** Presentation and discussion of the summary of the workshop's proceedings: conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the quality of vital statistics in participating countries. **Evaluation of the workshop**

Annex 3. Pre-workshop assignments for civil registrars

Pre-workshop assignment 1 – Review and assessment of the national civil registration system

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the organizational and technical aspects of the national civil registration system. The questionnaire also assesses the state of the development and methods of evaluation in the civil registration system. Please return the completed questionnaire before **25 November 2014** at the following address by email if possible or by fax:

Att. Ms. Maria-Isabel Cobos
2, UN Plaza DC2-1564
10017 New York, NY, USA
Tel. +1 917 367 3072
Fax. +1 212 963 1940
Email. cobos@un.org

Please provide detailed answers to the questions. When necessary, please attach additional sheets of paper.

Name, title, address and country of official completing this questionnaire:

PART I: LEGAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM

1. Is there a legal framework providing guidelines concerning how the civil registration system works?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If Yes, please provide us with the title of the law.

2. Which of the following best describe the type of civil registration organization currently in operation in your country?

☐ a national system with a central office to administer the system
☐ a national system with different governmental departments to administer the registration of vital events
☐ The country has separate systems of registration in each major administrative division (e.g., province or state level) with a central office at those levels to administer the system)
☐ Other arrangements (specify) _____

3. At national level, which agency has the primary responsibility for the registration of the vital events:

Vital event	Agency primarily responsible for registration
Live births	
Foetal deaths	
Deaths	
Cause of death	
Marriages	
Divorces	

4. Is there a coordination agency or inter-agency coordination committee at national level, for needs and services among different agencies dealing with civil registration?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, provide the name and main responsibility.

5. Location of the primary registration units? (Check applicable items)

	Births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
a) Municipal offices					
b) Health offices					
c) Revenue offices					
d) Court offices					
e) Parishes/temples					
f) Population registers					
g) Other, specify					

6. Are there secondary registration units in certain hospitals, clinics, or religious places (e.g., churches, temples) or other public places to supplement the registration network?. Include subsidiary registration places for marriages and divorces.

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Which of the following perform the functions of the local civil registrars in your country? (Local civil registrars are the persons authorized by law to record vital events and civil status). Check applicable items:

	Births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
a) Appointed civil registrars					
b) Priests, ministers					
c) Court clerks					
d) Notaries					
e) Justices of peace					
f) Teachers					
g) Other, specify					

8. What are the main duties and responsibilities of the local civil registrars, as specified by civil registration law and regulations?. Check applicable items.
   a. With respect to registration:
      ☐ Recording vital and civil status events and safekeeping of records
      ☐ Issuing certified copies of civil registration records
      ☐ Celebrating marriages
      ☐ Issuing burial permits

☐ Promotion of registration completeness
☐ Other, specify:

b. With respect to vital statistics collection and reporting:
☐ Reporting civil registration data to higher level offices
☐ Other, specify:

9. Do local civil registrars receive guidance for their work? Check applicable items.
☐ Copies of current laws and regulations on civil registration
☐ Updated handbooks or instructions on civil registration
☐ Handbooks on vital statistics reporting
☐ In service training
☐ Direct advice by higher level civil registration authorities through field visits
☐ Periodical bulletin of information concerning civil registration and vital statistics
☐ Circulars regarding procedures for civil registration
☐ Other, specify:

10. Technical supervision to local civil registrars work is provided by: (Check applicable items)
☐ Registration authorities from the National Agency (field visits from central office staff)
☐ Regional Registration authorities
☐ Judicial authorities vested with responsibility for the custody of the records
☐ The Mayor
☐ The Priest or Minister
☐ The local government authority
☐ Other, specify:

11. Administrative supervision to local civil registrars work is provided by: (Check applicable items)
☐ Registration authorities from the National Agency (field visits from central office staff)
☐ Regional Registration authorities
☐ Judicial authorities vested with responsibility for the custody of the records
☐ The Mayor
☐ The Priest or Minister
☐ The local government authority
☐ Other, specify

12. Which national agency and ministry are responsible for compiling vital statistics from civil registration?

Agency	
Ministry	

13. By what means is information on vital events transmitted to the compiling office?

	Individual/collective Pre printed forms	Summary reports	Computer tapes or diskettes	Computer transmission
Live births				
Foetal deaths				
Deaths				
Cause of death				
Marriages				
Divorces				

(ATTACH A DATA FLOW CHART)

PART II: TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Please provide a complete set of forms used for legal and statistical recording of all types of vital events.

PART III: EVALUATION OF COMPLETENESS AND QUALITY OF THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM

1. Does the civil registration system cover all segments of the population in the entire country?
☐Yes   ☐No
   If NO, please give a brief description of the coverage:

a) Which geographic areas are not covered? Why?

b) Which population groups (ethnic or national groups) are not covered? Why?

c) Any other categories that are not covered? Why?

2. Indicate if the registration coverage of vital events has been estimated in your country in the past ten years?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Cause of death	Marriages	Divorces
Yes						
No						

3. If YES for at least one event, indicate the most recent estimate of coverage for each event, the year to which this estimate refers and the method of evaluation used.

   a.   Level of coverage and year of reference

	Percentage of coverage	Year to which this estimate refers
Live births		
Foetal Deaths		
Deaths		
Cause of death		
Marriages		
Divorces		

   b.   Method of assessment

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Cause of death	Marriages	Divorces
Through retrospective questions in population census(es)		Not applicable				
Through a follow up (prospective) survey						
Through retrospective questions in a single round survey						
Through a birth history in a single round retrospective survey					Not applicable	Not applicable
Through a dual-records system						
Verbal autopsy						
Other (specify)						

4. What agency is responsible for compiling and disseminating information on cause of death?

5. In the past ten years, have any studies been conducted to assess the accuracy of information on cause of death? If so, please attach the resulting report.

Pre-workshop assignment 2 – Report

Please write a report addressing the following items:

- Does your office compile vital statistics from the civil registration system? If yes, briefly describe what statistics are being compiled.
- What are the factors that hamper the production of vital statistics from civil registration in your country?
- Are there any plans to improve the civil registration and vital statistics system in your country?

Please return the completed report before **25 November 2014** at the following address by email if possible or by fax:

Att. Ms. Maria-Isabel Cobos
2, UN Plaza DC2-1564
10017 New York, NY, USA
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Email. cobos@un.org

Annex 4. Pre-workshop assignments for statisticians

Pre-workshop assignment 1 - Review of sources and methods for vital statistics

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the sources and methods for obtaining vital statistics used in your country. Please return the completed questionnaire before <mark>25 November 2014</mark> at at the following address by email if possible or by fax:

Att. Ms. Maria-Isabel Cobos
2, UN Plaza DC2-1564
10017 New York, NY, USA
Tel. +1 917 367 3072
Fax. +1 212 963 1940
Email. cobos@un.org

Please provide detailed answers to the questions. When necessary, please attach additional sheets of paper.

Name, title, address and country of official completing this questionnaire:

PART I: SUMMARY INFORMATION ON VITAL STATISTICS

1. Is there a legal framework defining responsibilities for the collection, processing and dissemination of vital statistics?

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    a. If Yes, which agency has the primary responsibility for the:

Vital events	Agency primarily responsible for	
	Collection of data	**Processing and dissemination of data**

Live births		
Foetal deaths		
Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

b. If Yes, please provide us with the title of the law.

2. Which of the following best describe the type of organizational structure for the collection, processing and dissemination of vital statistics?

☐ a centralized system at the national level
☐ a decentralized system in each state or province or any other major division of the country
☐ The head office of the population register is in charge of the vital statistics
☐ Other arrangements (specify) _____
☐ Vital statistics are not compiled

3. Indicate the source(s) of data currently used to obtain vital statistics on:

	Births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
a) Civil registration					
b) Population Censuses					
c) Sample surveys					
d) Health records					
e) Dual record system					
f) Other (please specify)					

4. Are current available vital statistics obtained from multiple data sources?, indicate whether these statistics are coherent and if not explain why.

[blank box]

5. Please specify the definitions of vital events adopted in your country.

Live birth

[blank box]

Foetal death

[blank box]

Death

[blank box]

Marriage

[blank box]

Divorce

[blank box]

PART II: DATA SOURCES IN DETAIL

A – Civil registration:
1. Does a civil registration system exist in your country?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

2. If YES, what event does the civil registration cover?

	Live births	Feotal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

If you replied YES to at least one event, please answer questions 3 to 18, otherwise go to **section B – Sample Surveys**.

3. Which national agency and ministry are responsible for civil registration?

Agency	
Ministry	

4. Is civil registration used as a source for statistics on:

	Fertility	Foetal mortality	Mortality	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

If YES to at least one of the event, please answer questions 8 to 15, otherwise go to **section B – Sample surveys**.

5. Which national agency and ministry are responsible for compiling vital statistics from civil registration?

Agency	
Ministry	

6. By what means is information on vital events transmitted to the compiling office?

	Individual/collective Pre printed forms	Summary reports	Computer tapes or diskettes	Computer transmission
Live births				
Foetal deaths				
Deaths				
Marriages				
Divorces				

(ATTACH A DATA FLOW CHART)

7. Are rates calculated from civil registration data on vital events?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

If YES,

   a. Please indicate the source used for the most recent population estimates used as denominator in the computation of current vital rates:

Continuous population register	
Population census (give year)	
Sample survey (give year)	
Other, specify	

   b. Please indicate the technique used for the time adjustment in the population estimate (when the base data is not secured annually by a population register):

Interpolation	
Extrapolation	
Demographic equation	
Other, specify	

8. Indicate if vital statistics are published, their frequency and the title of the last publication containing these statistics?

	Fertility	Foetal mortality	Mortality	Marriages	Divorces
Published (Y/N)					
Frequency					
Title					

9. Are data on vital events tabulated by date of occurrence or/and registration?

	Date of occurrence	Date of registration
Live births		
Foetal deaths		
Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

10. Are data on vital events tabulated by place of occurrence or/and place of registration?

	Place of occurrence	Place of registration
Live births		
Foetal deaths		
Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

11. Is the information on place of usual residence (of mother for births and foetal deaths and of deceased for deaths) registered?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths
Yes			
No			

  a. If YES to at least one event, is this information used in the calculation of vital rates?
  ☐ Yes   ☐ No

12. Indicate the level of accuracy of reporting of age of mother in case of Live births and of the deceased in case of Deaths and specify if any study to evaluate the age quality have been carried out.

Age of mother

Age of deceased

13. List vital statistics obtained from civil registration (use additional sheets if necessary).

14. Indicate if the registration coverage of vital events has been estimated in your country in the past ten years?

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Yes					
No					

15. If YES for at least one event, indicate the most recent estimate of coverage for each event, the year to which this estimate refers and the method of evaluation used.

   c. Level of coverage and year of reference

	Percentage of coverage	Year to which this estimate refers
Live births		
Foetal Deaths		

Deaths		
Marriages		
Divorces		

d. Method of assessment

	Live births	Foetal deaths	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces
Through retrospective questions in population census(es)		Not applicable			
Through a follow up (prospective) survey					
Through retrospective questions in a single round survey					
Through a birth history in a single round retrospective survey				Not applicable	Not applicable
Through a dual-records system					
Other (specify)					

B – Sample surveys:

1. Have sample surveys been undertaken to obtain fertility and mortality statistics in the last 10 years?

	Fertility	Mortality
Yes		
No		

If YES, please indicate the number of surveys conducted in the last 10 years and provide the following information for the last two surveys.

	Survey 1	Survey 2
2. Title of survey		
3. Date		
4. Coverage:		
a. Geographic areas		
b. Population		
5. Sample fraction percentage:		
6. Type of operation		
a. Single-round survey		
b. Multi-round survey		
c. Sample survey combined with continuous registration (dual record system)		

7. Method of sampling		

8. Is this a specialized survey on fertility and mortality?
☐ Yes ☐ No

   If No, what are the other topics covered in the survey?

9. Provide a list of fertility and mortality statistics obtained from the surveys:

	Survey 1	Survey 2
Fertility statistics		
Mortality statistics		

10. Have these estimates been evaluated? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    a. If Yes, how?

	Survey 1	Survey 2
Fertility statistics		
Mortality statistics		

11. What are the technique(s) used to obtain estimates:

	Survey 1	Survey 2
a. Reverse Survival		
b. Own Children Method		
c. Reconstructed Birth Histories		
d. Children Ever Born		
e. Recent Births		
f. Birth Histories		
g. Survival of Children ever born		
h. Birth Histories		
i. Recent Household Deaths		
j. Survival of Parents		
k. Survival of Siblings		
l. Others, specify		

12. Indicate if age accuracy has been evaluated and which techniques have been used.

Survey 1	
Survey 2	

13. Have results from these surveys been published?
☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If Yes, provide dates when the results were published and the title of the publication.

	Survey 1	Survey 2
Publication dates		
Publication title		

14. Indicate the name of institution responsible for the collection, processing of data and dissemination of results.

Survey 1	
Survey 2	

15. Please provide us with the relevant sections of the questionnaires used.

C - POPULATION CENSUSES:
1. Have population censuses been used to obtain fertility and mortality estimates?

	Fertility	Mortality
Yes		

No

If YES, please provide date of latest census used to collect such information and answer questions 2 to 7 below:

	Fertility	Mortality
Census date		

2. Provide a list of fertility and mortality statistics obtained from the census:

Fertility statistics	
Mortality statistics	

3. Have these estimates been evaluated? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   a. If Yes, how?

Fertility statistics	
Mortality statistics	

4. Select the technique(s) used to obtain estimates:

Fertility		**Mortality**	
Reverse Survival		Survival of Children ever born	
Own Children Method		Birth Histories	
Reconstructed Birth Histories		Recent Household Deaths	
Children Ever Born		Survival of Parents	
Recent Births		Survival of Siblings	
Birth Histories			

5. Indicate if age accuracy has been evaluated and which techniques have been used.

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6. Have results from the census been published?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If Yes, provide dates the results were published.

Publication dates
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Publication title
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7. Indicate the name of institution responsible for the collection, processing of data and dissemination of results.

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8. Please, provide us with the relevant sections of the questionnaire.

## Pre-workshop assignment 2 – Report

Please write up a report addressing the following items:

- Do current available vital statistics satisfy users' needs? If not, explain why.
- What are the factors that hamper the production of vital statistics from civil registration in your country?
- Are there any plans to improve the civil registration and vital statistics system in your country?

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