

Review and Evaluation of UNFPA Supported Projects on Civil
Registration and Vital Statistics

Consultancy Report

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The views expressed are those of the author. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development and the United Nations Statistical Office have the right to modify any of the recommendations made herein.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the conclusions and recommendations of a review and evaluation of the projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The review was conducted, by way of a consultancy, from 4 January to 12 March 1993 in New York and included both study of the files of selected civil registration projects and discussions with the technical officers dealing with the subject in the UNFPA and the UN Statistical Office. The successful completion of this evaluation study would have been impossible without the assistance and ready cooperation extended by the UN Statistical Office, the UNFPA and the UN Archives and grateful thanks is tendered to them. Annex 1 lists the persons with whom discussions were held and who rendered invaluable assistance.

2. The report is presented in four chapters. The terms of reference of the consultancy and the criteria which were developed for selection, as case studies, of representative groups of countries in which civil registration projects were implemented are presented in this chapter. Chapter II includes a discussion of the civil registration and vital statistics projects in each of the selected countries. Chapter III considers general issues relating to the funding of civil registration and vital statistics projects based on the experiences of the projects reviewed. A final chapter, Chapter IV, presents the conclusions and recommendations together for easy reading. At the end of the report three annexes have been included. Annex 1 lists the persons met and with whom discussions were held. Annex 2 presents the list of civil registration and vital statistics projects funded by the UNFPA so far. Annex 3 contains extracts from the UNFPA Guidelines relating to the funding of civil registration and vital statistics projects.

Terms of reference:

3. The terms of reference of the consultancy were as follows:

The consultant is expected to prepare a comprehensive report on the review and evaluation of the UNFPA supported projects on civil registration and vital statistics in some selected countries. In particular, the consultant will perform the following duties:

- (a) Selection of group of countries for the study based on a set criteria;

- (b) Review the reports (progress and final) over the entire life of the projects;
- (c) Assess the contribution of UNFPA projects to the overall improvement of the national civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- (d) Evaluate the progress achieved in improving the civil registration and training the national staff;
- (e) Present a draft outline of the report to the UN Statistical Division for review and approval;
- (f) In addition to the other materials, the report should include the work achieved, the shortcomings and the lessons learned;
- (g) Write a final chapter including the conclusions and recommendations arrived at, including suggestions of UNFPA funding in this field.

Focus of the report:

4. The terms of reference, while specifying the parameters of this study, state clearly the main focus of this report - namely, to assess the contribution of the UNFPA projects in this activity to the overall improvement of the national civil registration and vital statistics systems and recommend appropriate course of action with regard to future funding in this field. In this regard, some of the more important aspects would be whether the project has achieved the minimum objectives set, whether the national staff have been trained so as to equip them for sustaining the system, whether momentum has been established which would further the improvement of the system and whether the utility of the system has been adequately recognized by the national government so as ensure its continued interest and support. The study, therefore, does not lay undue emphasis on a detailed evaluation of the individual projects selected for consideration but is more in the nature of a thematic evaluation of projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics. Consequently, the case studies do not present detailed information with regard to the implementation of individual components in the projects but concentrate on the implementation of the main components to assess whether the objectives of the projects have or have not been achieved either wholly or partly.

5. The scope of the evaluation of the projects selected as case studies has, in some cases, been severely limited by the availability of records. Despite the assistance received from the UN Archives and the UNFPA and Statistical Office, it has not always been possible to obtain older files. Doubtless, the limited time available for carrying out this evaluative study was a factor that imposed time limits for search and retrieval of records. However, it can be stated with assurance that these limitations do not affect the validity of the conclusions drawn.

6. It would be relevant to note that this has been entirely a desk evaluation. In the case of projects completed some time ago, this would mean that there is no information on the current situation on the ground. However, discussions with the Technical Advisers in the Statistical Office and the Programme Officers in the UNFPA provided some information which, even if impressionistic, helped to fill this gap.

Criteria for selection of case studies:

7. As stated earlier, this thematic evaluation of projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics is based on the study of such projects in some selected countries. The selection of the countries was made on the basis of the following criteria:

- i) when the project was started - those started or completed quite some time ago, to assess whether they had the momentum to establish the civil registration system all over the country;
- ii) the size of the country, both in terms of population and area - this would influence the scale of the project and its organizational aspects;
- iii) implementation of the project and whether this was considered reasonably successful or not - Admittedly, in the absence of technical evaluations of the results of the project after its completion, there could be a degree of subjectivity in applying this criterion. However, since there has generally been some degree of feedback and personal assessment by technical officers even after the completion of a project, the subjective element would be minimal.
- iv) regional variations - differing systems of administration would have influenced the structure and content of the projects.

8. In addition, regional distribution was also kept in mind. The choice was also restricted to those countries for which the documentation would not need excessive translation facilities into English. Based on these criteria, the following countries were selected as case studies:

Criterion (i):

Sierra Leone	SIL/79/P03
Syria	SYR/76/P06, SYR/80/P01, SYR/91/P06
Tanzania	URT/79/P05

Criterion (ii):
Nigeria NIR/85/PO2, NIR/85/PO3

Criterion (iii):
Kenya KEN/79/PO4, KEN/85/PO1
Myanmar MYA/75/PO2, MYA/88/PO5

Criterion (iv):
Botswana BOT/83/PO1, BOT/88/PO2, BOT/90/PO2
Yemen YEM/81/PO2, YEM/88/PO1, YEM/88/026,
YEM/92/PO2, PDY/85/PO8

The project PDY/85/PO8 relating to the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen has been included, for the purposes of this study, under Yemen.

II. CASE STUDIES

SIERRA LEONE:¹

9. The project SIL/79/PO3 - Strengthening of Civil Registration, was formulated in mid 1979 and approved towards the beginning of 1980. Its immediate objectives were to strengthen the civil registration system in a model area, develop and experiment with the procedures and field organization to determine the most appropriate ones, produce estimates of demographic variables in the model areas, develop a uniform law relating to civil registration and secure effective implementation of the registration law through training of the hierarchy. The original concept was that the project should go on stream after the law had been enacted but it was soon appreciated that this pre-condition was impractical.

10. The project was implemented in two phases. The duration of the first phase was over three years from 1980 to 1982. It must be noted that the first phase, though originally envisaged as over three years, was initially actually funded only for the two years 1980 and 1981. However, rephasing of funding was made which resulted in the postponement of several project activities to 1982 and 1983. Also, since it was considered desirable that the results of the investment already made should be consolidated, an extension for two years was approved in 1984. The second phase was implemented from 1985 to 1988. The Births and Deaths Office under the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths, Ministry of Health, was the government agency responsible for implementing the project.

11. The first phase of the project can be said to have commenced with the arrival of the project adviser in September 1980. However, it would seem that from the start the project was constrained by a slender budget which included the curtailment of the term of the adviser to just 18 months as against the original envisaged 36 months. In fact, the adviser left in March 1982. The adviser had recognized that the project had many weak elements and had submitted revised proposals in November 1980 which, however, were not fully built into the project. It was pointed out that civil registration projects normally required three to four years of gestation because one was dealing with a system which by its nature was not one susceptible to rapid change. The adviser left in March 1982 and, thereafter, it was run by the national counterpart.

1 Annex 2 indicates that there was a project SIL/71/PO2 Vital Statistics Registration on which the outlay appears to have been only a nominal US \$ 34. No records were available regarding this project.

12. In November 1984 it was evaluated by an Evaluation Team on behalf of the UNFPA. The evaluation report² presents a detailed assessment of the project and, therefore, it would be unnecessary to repeat much of what has been stated there. However, it would be relevant to consider issues relating to a few major aspects.

13. The implementation of the project was beset by difficulties from the start. The curtailment of the term of the adviser resulted in the loss of effective management quite early in the life of the project. This was particularly so since the adviser had to devote considerable time to the drafting of the legislation relating to civil registration. Also, as pointed out in the Evaluation Report, the choice of the experimental area, namely the Eastern Province, was unfortunate inasmuch as it was not within easy reach for supervision. However, it must be recognized that the choice, at the time it was made, was understandable since it was an area where civil registration was compulsory over a large part and it was expected that this would augur well for its strengthening. The fact that this did not happen was the result of a combination of circumstances, including the early departure of the adviser which itself was a consequence of low funding.

14. The progress reports from September 1980 to March 1982 indicate that some progress was made in implementation of the project. Equipment was procured within about six months after the arrival of the project adviser and data processing needs were assessed through a technical mission in 1981. A Technical Advisory Committee was established and held five meetings between August 1981 and March 1982. The uniform law relating to civil registration was enacted on 15 December 1983 and enforced all over the country with effect from 3 June 1985.

15. However, the progress reports also clearly indicate the difficulties faced in implementation. There was a rephasing of funds from 1981 to 1982 which slowed down implementation in 1981 and particularly affected group training of registration officials and other training programmes. In fact, the group training could not be implemented till late 1982, due to funds not being released by the government. This also seriously affected the efficient organization of the seminars and workshops that were held. Briefly, the first phase was partly successful inasmuch as the uniform law was drafted and passed, and a beginning was made of testing of new procedures and field methodology. However, the forms and procedures had not yet been fully tested, training was not as intensive or as broad over the various cadres of the hierarchy as envisaged, and

2 Report of the Evaluation of UNFPA Assistance to the Strengthening of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System in Sierra Leone: Project SIL/79/PO3 - United Nations Fund for Population Activities, New York, December 1984.

the results of the experiment were insufficient to provide any reasonable assurance of the success of the new procedures or desirability of their extension to other areas.

16. The report of the Evaluation Team endorsed the extension of the project which was already under consideration but recommended that its components should be carefully assessed, including the choice of the experimental area and the training inputs. This extension, or the second phase of the project, gathered momentum with the arrival of the adviser in December 1985. It terminated in 1988. New and more convenient experimental areas were identified, and the registration system was strengthened in the project areas. The methodology was tested and considered suitable for adoption on a country-wide basis. The utility of the system was also demonstrated with regard to deriving demographic estimates. Training of all levels of the hierarchy was completed. However, operational difficulties evidently still persisted, as the progress reports in early 1989 indicate. Lack of budgetary support or of releases by government persisted and were reflected in paucity of furniture, working space and adequate record room. The vehicles were, as one report puts it, "in the garage" due to lack of maintenance. There is no information on record whether the new forms and procedures have been universally adopted or introduced in other areas in phases to eventually cover the country. It is understood that this has not happened.

17. This project had in it almost all the pre-project situations that condition civil registration projects. These would include the absence of the enabling legislation, the restricted enforcement of registration in only some areas, the weak implementation of the system resulting in the information obtained having virtually little credibility, an untrained hierarchy and, as a cumulative result, little appreciation within government of the utility of civil registration. Under such circumstances, it would be unrealistic to expect perceptible results within a year or two of commencement of the project. However, even with the constraints under which Phase I of this project operated, one major objective was achieved, namely the preparation of a draft uniform law which was later adopted. The other objectives were achieved to a considerable degree by the end of the second phase. In particular, the training of the hierarchy was organized which included the primary registration officials, the provincial and district registrars, and the chairmen of village area committees. The training of notifiers was also organized. These programmes would have established, at the minimum, a core of officials familiar with the civil registration system and its procedures. With periodic refresher courses they could form the core of a set of trainers. The use of the data available through the system for deriving relevant demographic indicators was also demonstrated. A consultancy in November - December, 1985 provided recommendations regarding the organization of the vital records library.

18. The experience of the Sierra Leone project indicates the need for more careful planning of its components and a realistic appraisal of both the time span and funding requirements. It would also seem unrealistic to await the enactment of the necessary legislation since, in practice, that is quite often the first task of the adviser. The drafting of such legislation or, where it already exists, its review and improvement if necessary, its submission to the government and energizing its enactment are validly part of advisory services. The project also illustrates the utility of the demonstration approach in a situation where such an approach was appropriate.

19. The implementation of this project has the major achievement of establishing the legal framework for civil registration in the country. It also, at the time of its conclusion, had improved skills of the registration staff through training and had established a model system which could have been adopted all over the country. However, it is very doubtful whether the momentum of the project was maintained.

SYRIA:

20. Two projects in Syria relating to civil registration have been financed by UNFPA. These are SYR/76/PO6 - Assistance to the Directorate of Civil Registration and SYR/91/PO6 - Reforms for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics³.

21. The first project, SYR/76/PO6, had components relating to a consultancy for review of the system and recommendations for its improvement and of equipment for preservation of the records in microfilm form. The system that had been instituted under the civil registration law of 1923 was improved as part of the activities of the project⁴. An evaluation based on the results of the censuses of 1970 and 1980 indicated that the under-registration improved from about 7 per cent in 1970 to about less than one per cent by 1980. The coverage is, therefore, satisfactory. However, the utility of the system for planning and other purposes was severely restricted by the lack of organization of data processing and record preservation. This was considered as causing a serious gap in information for planning of most aspects of a population programme. The Programme Review and Strategy Development Report of

3 Another project was also funded SYR/80/PO1 - Civil Registration, but the only expenditure was on the mission costs which resulted in a draft project document which was not sanctioned.

4 The files relating to this project were, unfortunately, not available. The brief discussion is based on discussions with the Statistical Office and UNFPA.

the UNFPA recognized this deficiency in the system and recommended that support such as technical advisory services, micro - computers and training should be provided for necessary improvement in the vital statistics system ⁵.

22. The second project, SYR/91/PO6, was formulated for improving the system. The long term objectives of the project are the general ones of ensuring accurate and complete coverage of registration and vital events and the production of reliable and timely vital statistics. There is a third long term objective "to progressively replace 'place of origin' by 'place of present residence' in the registration records so as to provide information on the current population of each administrative unit". The immediate objectives are the computerization of vital statistics, compilation of data on causes of death, training of registration and data processing personnel through fellowships and in-country training programmes, improvement in the systems of maintenance of registration records and retrieval of information, and amendment of the civil registration law to replace 'place of origin' by 'place of present residence'.

23. The main components in this project are a consultancy mission for assessment of the existing system and recommendations on its reform, a consultancy mission on data processing, equipment supply and fellowships. The execution of the project is by both DTCD and UNFPA. The former is responsible for implementing the components relating to the consultancies and fellowships while the UNFPA would implement the component relating to supply of equipment. The Department of Civil Registration of the Ministry of Interior is the government implementing agency.

24. The project commenced, in effect, in July 1992 with the preparatory steps of collection of documentation for the use of the consultant on civil registration which was the first consultancy and which was in October- November 1992. The consultancy on computerization was completed in November - December 1992. The project does not include a consultancy regarding the systems of record maintenance and retrieval of information. However, it includes the supply and installation of microfilm equipment and training of the staff to handle the equipment. It is stated in the project document that the supplier of the equipment and the consultant for civil registration and vital statistics will be assigned responsibility for ensuring that this component is successfully implemented. In the absence of independent expertise in this field, it would seem necessary that this component is very closely monitored by the implementing agencies to ensure that the desired objective is attained.

⁵ Programme Review and Strategy Development Report - Syrian Arab Republic, UNFPA, 1990, New York. Page 61.

25. The first consultancy on civil registration and vital statistics dealt with the registration procedures and determination of the items on which information should be collected through the system of civil registration so as to obtain the data that was desired and also satisfy the requirements of computerized data processing. The report of the consultant, therefore, included suggestions with regard to content, procedures and format of the forms for collection of information.

26. The second consultancy on data processing was able to train seven staff members on the use of computers for processing of vital statistics data, design the forms for this purpose and prepare coding and other instructions. The core computer unit has, in effect, been established.

27. The training component has been partially implemented and it is expected that this objective will be fully achieved.

28. It is too early to assess the progress of implementation of the project. Unlike other projects, this is not an area demonstration project. It is national in the sense that its objectives are structural improvements of an already existing system with particular emphasis on data processing and utilization. Its important feature is that it attempts to establish not merely better data but better use of the data. The establishment of mechanisms of coordination between the various agencies that could benefit from the system is one of the activities of the project. In this context, the consideration of the recommendations of the two consultancy reports and the determination of the follow up action are the next important steps. It is doubtless the common anxiety of the implementing agencies to expedite this process. It would be desirable to follow up the recommendations in the consultancy reports. It is also recommended that the project be evaluated on its conclusion.

TANZANIA:

29. In October 1978, a UNFPA mission to Tanzania concluded that civil registration was an important component of population related activities which should be assisted. Following this assessment of need, this project URT/79/PO5 - Reorganization and Expansion of the Civil Registration System, was formulated. The project was planned to run over a four year period from 1980-81 to 1983-84, with an experimental civil registration system being tried out initially in four districts over one year and, in the next phase, being expanded over an additional 21 districts. Its long term objectives were to establish an efficient system of registration of births and deaths throughout the country which would provide data for the estimation of vital rates and other related measures necessary for development activities. Its immediate objectives were to establish an experimental compulsory civil registration system in selected

districts and, on the basis of the experience of this experimental exercise to develop a civil registration system in sample registration areas from which data could be used for estimation of vital rates. The government implementing agency was the Office of the Registrar General in the Ministry of Justice. An international adviser was associated with the project for two years till 1982.

30. Though the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics for coordinating this project was constituted in June 1980 no formal orders were issued till June 1981. The Committee met in March 1981 and, in view of the lack of preparations, decided that the project would start from July 1981. The selection of the four districts, issue of notifications designating the officials in charge of the project and other preliminary action were completed. But, as the progress reports indicate, there were difficulties which affected implementation such as long delays in release of government funds, recruitment of personnel and delivery of equipment, specially of vehicles. However, the initial formats of the registration forms for the trial areas and supporting documentation were prepared as also basic material relating to public enlightenment.

31. The project did not run on course almost from the start due to the difficulties referred to above. The progress of the project was reviewed in the Tripartite Review meeting in 1982 and, taking into consideration the difficulties in implementation that persisted, which were mainly financial and human resources, it was recommended that the experiment should be extended only over an additional four districts and not over 21 as originally envisaged. Consequently, it was decided to abandon the original focus of obtaining reliable estimates from the experimental areas and select the additional districts from the point of view of administrative convenience and accessibility for effective supervision. This conclusion was quite reasonable and should have been the view from the start.

32. However, the implementation of the project continued to be poor. In fact, the progress report for the year 1984 states that "a sharp decline in the number of registered events was evident in all project areas in 1983 when compared with the number of events in 1982". The report identifies some of the reasons for the poor performance. These included - chronic shortages of paper which resulted in lack of forms, the forms themselves seemed too detailed, training of the registration hierarchy could not be completed before the trials began in the four districts, and supervision suffered due to lack of transport, fuel and tires. Also, the frequent transfer of field personnel was a serious factor. One important factor was the absence of a central unit for direction and supervision of the project in the office of the Registrar General. Some of these difficulties were partially got over but resulted in considerably reducing the utility of the experiment.

33. In view of the faltering implementation of the project, advice was sought from Mr. Benjamin Gill, the Chief Technical Advisor of the project in Kenya. In the early part of 1984 he gave a series of recommendations which included a revision of the forms to simplify them, provision of motor cycles rather than vehicles, and a detailed work plan. These recommendations were accepted by the project authorities. The revision of the project was made to take into consideration the improvements suggested. The project, in effect, therefore continued to 1987.

34. In 1987 an assessment was made of the project by the ECA expert who, while recognizing that the project had provided some valuable experience, pointed out that structural and financial difficulties still persisted, including personnel problems and insufficient supervision. The project was, among other projects, also evaluated by an UNFPA Evaluation Mission in January-February 1987⁶. This report concluded that the targets set in the project were unrealistic and were the result of inadequate appreciation of local conditions including communication and personnel problems, lack of organization within the office of the Registrar General to undertake the project and successive revisions in the forms. A further ECA mission report in late 1991 indicated that these factors continued to operate. In particular, there were serious shortages of forms due to lack of paper and insufficient space for record keeping. Tabulation had also not progressed to the desired degree. The public enlightenment campaign was also weak. Recognizing these difficulties, the new procedures had been extended, by 1991, to only the districts of Zanzibar and to nine out of the 20 regions of the mainland. The extension placed more emphasis on events occurring in health institutions since there were difficulties in the induction of village secretaries as registration assistants for netting events that occurred elsewhere. In other words, the effective extension of civil registration to the rural areas could not be made.

35. The training components in the project were implemented. The study tour to various countries was organized and practical experience was gained by three officers of the Registrar General's office through a three month association with the civil registration project in Kenya. Internal training was also organized as the project progressed but its effectiveness was reduced by frequent transfers of personnel.

36. A review of the implementation of the project would support the view that it has not made a significant impact on the system. The model system as developed by the project has unfortunately not been continued in the manner intended because of chronic shortages of resources. It is unfortunate that even during its life, the

⁶ Report on the Evaluation of Tanzania Country Programme 1980-1983, UNFPA, New York, May 1987; Appendix I.

project did not run smoothly. The absence of an adviser over the life of the project, in the Tanzanian situation, would, in retrospect, appear unfortunate. The changes in the forms mid-stream also cast a strain on implementation with partial waste of resources such as forms already printed and new printing requirements. It would have been desirable to have tested out the forms in a small number of areas over a longer period than just one year, the test not being restricted to field issues only but also being extended to the stage of tabulation to assess suitability from every point of view. Another factor that reduced the effectiveness of the national implementing agency was evidently the lack of cooperation and coordination between this agency and associated ministries. In other words, there did not appear to be a recognition within government of the importance of the civil registration system and of its utility other than statistical. It would seem desirable that a realistic assessment of the feasibility and scope of such a project is first made before a project document is drawn up. Such an assessment could include detailed discussions with the appropriate higher levels in government so that the commitment on the part of all concerned is assured from the beginning.

NIGERIA:

37. Two projects relating to civil registration have been funded in Nigeria. These are NIR/85/PO2 - Establishment of Nation-wide Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System in Nigeria, Experimental Phase and NIR/85/PO3 - Civil Registration. The latter, as explained later, is essentially a component of the first project. The two are, therefore, considered together.

38. The long range objectives of the project were to establish an efficient birth and death registration system, create an awareness of the importance of civil registration, provide information useful for the development of comprehensive population policies, and produce reliable vital statistics data that would help other concerned agencies in government in the formulation of their programmes. The immediate objectives were to test registration forms, manuals and related documents, train local personnel in the organization and management of the civil registration system, enhance the understanding of the factors underlying low or non-registration of births and deaths, develop efficient methods and procedures of registration of births and deaths, to obtain reliable data on births and deaths in the selected areas, and use the lessons from the project to design a phased programme of expansion of the registration system throughout the country. The National Population Bureau, later the National Population Commission, was the government implementing agency.

39. The original work plan of the project envisaged that it would be implemented over a three year period from 1986-87 to 1988-89.

The field work was planned to be implemented in two phases. In the first phase the experiment would be carried out in four urban Local Government Areas over one year. Thereafter, it was proposed that the system would be reviewed and any changes that were considered desirable would be made. The second phase would then commence with the extension of the experimental system to four rural Local Government Areas and run for one year. The preliminary organizational work was expected to be completed within about ten months from July 1986 to March 1987, which included review of the existing systems, preparation of forms for registration of vital events, establishment of the necessary technical committees, and establishment of the registration offices in the areas selected for the first phase. The first phase as also preliminary action regarding extension of the project to the rural areas of the second phase, and the preparation of the draft of the uniform law governing civil registration, were expected to be carried out in the period 1987-88. In the third year 1988-89 phase two of the project was to be implemented, followed by an evaluation of the project.

40. The activities relating to training fellowships and study tour were commenced by April 1986. The study tour to the United States by the Director of the National Population Bureau, as it was then called, was in July 1986. The National Population Bureau had also prepared experimental forms which, in fact, had been printed. The momentum of implementation picked up with the Chief Technical Adviser joining the project in September 1986. The work plan, as has been the general experience, had to be recast. The forms for reporting of births and deaths were reviewed and simplified on the consideration that in a situation where a new system was being introduced simplicity in forms and procedures were very desirable features. The different enactments relating to civil registration that existed in the States were reviewed and a uniform legislation drafted. The training manuals and procedures were also prepared. Fact finding tours were also conducted to the States and Local Government Areas in which the experimental areas were located to keep the concerned administrations informed about the scope and objectives of the project and to seek their cooperation. This was particularly necessary because the supervisory levels were proposed to be drawn from these administrations. Liaison was also sought to be established with the health authorities to induct the health institutions into the system. A publicity plan which was based on the active involvement of local leadership in the registration process, was also prepared. A Vital Statistics Unit was established in the National Population Bureau and a national Project Officer was designated. Training for the senior levels in the experimental procedures was also provided. Equipment and vehicles were received in time. The experimental areas were also decided.

41. According to the revised work plan, all preliminary action for the first phase such as establishment of the registration offices in the four selected urban areas and recruitment and training of

the field staff were expected to be completed by March 1987 and the experimental field work was to commence in April 1987. However, the serious budgetary constraints in Government resulted in the project not being funded to the extent required. Consequently, the experimental forms could not be printed, the field staff were not appointed and the commencement of the first phase was put off. The matter was considered in the Tripartite review of the project conducted on 5th and 7th October 1987 and it was decided that the project would, for the time being, be restricted to only the four urban areas, the implementation of the second phase being postponed for later consideration, and that necessary funds and other facilities would be made available. Ultimately, the actual implementation of the project in the four urban areas commenced in July-August 1988 and was completed by June 1989. The rural experimental phase commenced in July 1989 and ran till June 1990.

42. With the completion of the two phases, an evaluation workshop was held at Kano from 30th July to 1st August 1990. The workshop examined the experimental procedures, the format of the forms and management issues and came up with recommendations with regard to some modifications and the extension of the system gradually over the country. The project was considered in the Tripartite Review meeting of 26-27 September 1990 and it was recommended that the registration activity in the experimental areas should continue and that the tempo should not be lost despite the concentration on the population census which, by then, had gained importance. It was also recommended that the results of the project should be evaluated. The Tripartite Review meeting of 11-12 November 1992, while considering this project, recommended that the residual funds be used for a study tour by a team of officials to a few selected countries and for a consultancy mission for the formulation of a new project.

43. The training component of the project in relation to senior staff has been successfully implemented. Training in demography, civil registration and use of computers for processing of data has been provided, while study tours have also been of great utility. The study tour planned this year of a team of officials would further strengthen the expertise within the civil registration unit of the registration organization. This, and the establishment of the processing facility, can be considered as achievements of the project.

44. It has been mentioned that the printing of forms was held up due to lack of finances and the consequent non-availability of paper. After negotiations, funds were provided for the import of paper by the Netherlands Government. The acquisition of paper through these funds was considered as the separate project NIR/85/PO3 - Civil Registration referred to earlier. However, on reconsideration, it was considered that the more optimum use of these funds would be to establish a printing facility in the National Population Commission (formerly the National Population

Bureau). This facility has now been established and can be considered one of the achievements of the project.

45. The objectives of the project can be said to have been only partially achieved. These include the establishment of a core unit for civil registration in the registration authority, the drafting of the uniform law, the training of senior personnel who, in turn, would constitute trainers, and the establishment of a printing facility. The project has also established the basis for an "active" registration system in place of the "passive" one that existed. It would be difficult to express a view on the efficacy of the system developed in the project in the absence of a detailed evaluation of its various parameters. The experimental system has not been able to constitute the high-level committees that would have greatly assisted in the establishment of the civil registration system. The public enlightenment campaign has been minimal and cannot be said to have been tested for effectiveness. Also, the utility of the system to other development agencies of government has not been demonstrated, nor has the requirement of registration documentation for various purposes such as school admissions, driving licences, burial, etc., been suggested to government. These, as well as possible improvements in the management of the system, could well form ingredients in a programme of extension of the procedures or in a new project.

46. The existing civil registration system was considered during the preparation of the Programme Review and Strategy Development Report by the UNFPA in February-March 1991⁷. It was concluded that the system was still fragmentary but that its establishment was a major requirement. The report recommends that, building on the results of the experimental project, the system should be progressively extended. The extension of the experimental civil registration system developed by the project cannot be recommended, at this stage at least, without an evaluation of the forms, the procedures and connected issues. It would be prudent to carry out such an evaluation at this stage even before a further project is developed. Such a detailed evaluation is generally not part of project formulation and it would be unfortunate if this opportunity is lost for carrying it out.

KENYA:

47. The two projects in Kenya relating to civil registration were KEN/79/PO4 - Civil Registration Demonstration Project and KEN/85/PO1 - Civil Registration Activities. The latter was an extension of the first one and was to enable the adviser to the

⁷ Programme Review and Strategy Development Report, Nigeria - February-March 1991, UNFPA, New York. Pages 8, 25, 70.

project to prepare a detailed report on the implementation of the demonstration project. These are, therefore, considered together.

48. In considering this project one has the advantage of having two very informative documents that describe the project and evaluate it. These are the report of the UNFPA Evaluation Mission of 1984⁸ and the report prepared by the adviser to the project after its completion⁹. The project has also been discussed in the Programme Review and Strategy Development Report of the UNFPA¹⁰.

49. The original project submitted in July 1979 was, as most of the other projects have been, titled "Strengthening of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems", and was to have been implemented over a two year period from October 1979 to September 1981. However, after an assessment by the international adviser to the project of its actual scope, its title was altered as "Civil Registration Demonstration Project" (CRDP) as being representative of its purpose. The project got under way in January 1981 and, apart from the international adviser, had the benefit of a UN volunteer as statistician - demographer. The progress of the project was reviewed at a Tripartite meeting in April 1983 when it was recommended that it be extended for another two years until the end of 1984.

50. The long term objectives of the project were to establish an efficient birth and death registration system, create an awareness among the population of the importance of civil registration, and produce reliable vital statistics data needed for planning social, economic and health programmes. The immediate objectives were to strengthen the civil registration system in the demonstration areas by the creation of a strong organization, train the personnel involved, improve methods and procedures of registration through experimentation including decentralization of registration activities, to obtain reliable data on births and deaths in the experimental areas, and create local expertise through training to ensure continuation and extension of the system. The Department of the Registrar General in the Attorney General's Office was the government implementing agency.

⁸ Report on the Evaluation of UNFPA Assistance to the Civil Registration Demonstration Project in Kenya: Project KEN/79/PO4, UNFPA, New York, December 1984

⁹ The Kenya Civil Demonstration Report - A strategy for a Rapidly Developing Country in Africa" by Mr. Benjamin Gill with assistance from Mr. J.K. Ronoh; Department of the Registrar General, printed by Government Printer, Nairobi, Kenya, 1989.

¹⁰ Programme Review and Strategy Development Report - Kenya, UNFPA, New York, 1991 (draft)

51. The first year of the project, 1981, was devoted to the study of project conditions, planning and preparations; the second year, 1982, was devoted to the introduction of the new system of civil registration and of programmes for public entitlement in four selected districts; and the third year, 1983, was spent on consolidation and improvement of this first phase and on preparations for launching the second phase. The latter phase was the extension of the project activities to four more districts.

52. The planning of the new system of registration was preceded by exploratory tours to the project areas to understand the existing system, determine the reasons for under-registration, and seek the support of the administrations at the district and other levels for project activities. Two working committees were established. The first was for Improvement of the Registration System (IRS) and the second for the Civil Registration Enlightenment Campaign (CREP). These committees succeeded in ensuring high level participation in the project and in the creation of an awareness that the activities of the project and its utility were multi-ministerial. Seminars for officials of related agencies were also held to indicate the need for and content of the enlightenment programme. A strong unit was established in the office of the Registrar General for implementation of the project which included the adviser, the administrator-cum-field organizer, the statistician - cum - demographer with a national counterpart and a senior press officer.

53. It is not as if there were no difficulties in implementation. There were delays in printing of the forms and holding of the training seminars. A crash operation had to be undertaken to distribute the experimental forms by the beginning of January 1982 but went on till mid-January, thus delaying the start of the experimental registration process. The new forms were used only for events occurring from 1st January 1982, while the old forms continued to be used for prior events which caused some confusion. However, these must be considered as part of the experimental process and were corrected by intensive supervision. The latter was possible due to the choice of the experimental areas having been made on the pragmatic considerations of proximity to headquarters and not, at the initial stage, to provide sample data.

54. The Tripartite Meeting in April 1983 recommended continuation and extension of the project in phases to other districts so as to cover the whole country ultimately. The first two years of the project were considered the first phase and the second phase was to run over two years 1983-84. The extension of the project was over four other districts selected on criteria such as existence of administrative infrastructure, availability of educational and health facilities, reasonable transportation facilities, local support and without any socio-cultural factors which might inhibit registration of births and deaths. The second phase, however, faced difficulties due to financial and administrative constraints. Funds and additional staff, particularly of Assistant District Registrars

who were the key persons in data collection and coaching of assistant chiefs, were not provided in time. The motorcycles that were needed for supervision and collection of forms were also not provided, resulting in delays of collection of forms and reduced controls. Both the reports referred to earlier (in footnotes 8 and 9) support the view that the launching of the second phase was based on a rather optimistic view of the availability of resources and inputs. In fact, based on this experience, it was recommended that further extension of the project to a third phase should be viewed with great caution.

55. The difficulties faced by the project were not unique to it and have been experienced by similar projects elsewhere. What is, however, of importance is that despite these difficulties, the project can be considered a success inasmuch as its major objectives were achieved. An organization for civil registration activities was established at headquarters, high level committees were constituted which emphasized the involvement of related ministries and departments in this activity, and reasonable structures were suggested, including the use of motorcycles in place of expensive vehicles. The forms were simplified and their formats were developed from the point of view of convenience to the citizen, the registration hierarchy and data processing. The decentralization of procedures, particularly of the issue of certificates, was also built in, and the formats were so devised as to permit such decentralization.

56. A statistical data processing unit was established. An important aspect of data processing was the availability of a computer printout listing all events in the order of the basic items of identification so that it served as an index. This was meant to facilitate the district registration offices in locating events when members of the public applied for certificates later. The tabulation programme thus not merely served statistical needs but also administrative requirements.

57. Training was a strong feature of implementation. The professional and management levels benefitted by fellowships and study tours while the training of the local operational personnel was quite extensive. Training material, often of an innovative character, was developed. The training manuals and the procedures developed would be useful in extension of the system to other areas with such modifications as local conditions may require. The training component was successful.

58. Public enlightenment campaign was also successfully implemented, in the first phase, through seminars and workshops for provincial and district heads of educational, health and social development agencies who were, with their other staff, expected to function as trainers and catalysts of change.

59. The project has also had two very desirable results. The first is the report on project activities referred to earlier (see footnote 9) prepared by the author jointly with a national project official. This report provides detailed documentation of the various activities of the project and serves as a guide to civil registration authorities. The other is that it has served as a training opportunity for civil registration officials of other nations in Africa.

60. In attempting to determine the factors for the success of the project one has to recall that Kenya has had a record of fairly long and fortunate attention to civil registration. As far back as 1962, the UN provided an advisor who prepared a scheme for the strengthening and extension of compulsory registration. In 1967 an expert from the United Kingdom was seconded who reorganized the registration services and established procedures for registration processes and data processing. It was against this background of change that this project was developed and implemented. The significant progress made in meeting the immediate objectives of the project can, apart from professional competence, be attributed to the presence of the advisor over the full life of the project. This ensured continuity of expertise and supervision. The support provided by the Government was crucial and in the first phase of the project was fully available. This is evidenced by the creation of the high level committees and by the technical freedom allowed to the project authorities.

61. The continuity and extension of the system developed by the project do not appear to have been smooth. A progress report towards the end of 1985 indicates that the extension of the project by government to five new districts, as the third phase, in 1985 was made without first laying the groundwork and with insufficient preparation. The necessary funds, equipment and personnel were also not provided. The Public Enlightenment unit in the office of the Registrar General was not yet established and, as a consequence, this aspect was neglected. The registration hierarchy, particularly at the middle levels, was evidently overburdened with consequent loss of efficacy of supervision and reduction of intensity of supervision. The Programme Review and Strategy Development Report referred to earlier suggests that results have been limited since the initial rise in registration of vital events that took place in the project areas appears to have fallen and that follow-up support for training, logistics and supervision within all the districts in which the experimental system has been introduced has been weak. The project has resulted in establishing and demonstrating a model civil registration system. Its extension and adoption on a national scale has, however, not yet come about.

MYANMAR:

62. There have been two projects relating to civil registration in Myanmar. These are MYA/75/PO2 - Vital Registration and Statistics System and MYA/88/PO5 - Improvement of Vital Registration and Statistics System (Phase II). These are interconnected projects.

63. The civil registration and vital statistics system in Myanmar was reorganized in 1962 with the assistance of the World Health Organization when a new system was introduced in replacement of the previous systems that had existed separately in Lower Burma from 1904 and Upper Burma from 1906. The system was initially under the supervision of the Vital Statistics Section of the Directorate of Health Services in the Ministry of Health. In 1964 this Section was transferred to the Central Statistical Organization of the Ministry of Planning. In the reorganized system, the vital events are registered by health personnel who forward the documents to the Township Medical Officers of each town who, after initial compilations, forward them to the Vital Statistics Section in the Central Statistical Organization. The system was, however, not implemented all over the country. Till 1977-78 the registration system, in terms of population, covered about 90 per cent of the urban population. The improvement and extension of the system, particularly to rural areas, was considered important. Towards this end, a civil registration and vital statistics project was planned. The initial project formulation commenced in 1975 but the project document was signed by the government only in January 1979. The project implementation was planned for four years from 1979-80 to 1982-83. The Central Statistical Organization was the government implementing agency.

64. The long-range objectives of the project MYA/75/PO2 were the establishment of a comprehensive and uniform vital registration system covering the whole country and to obtain from the system reliable statistics that would, as the project documentation put it, be "needed by professions of health, economics and demography amongst others". The immediate objectives were (i) the extension of the new vital registration system to the remaining areas of the country covering a population of about 24 million in four stages and (ii) providing training to headquarters staff connected with vital statistics in methods and techniques of keeping vital records, the use to be made of the data available, the techniques of compiling vital statistics reports and the application of international classification of diseases and causes of death.

65. It must be noted that the project did not envisage the review of the prevailing system and its procedures, including the format of the forms prescribed for reporting and recording of vital events. The main component was facilitating the extension of civil registration to cover 24 million of the population in four years and a training programme. However, the implementation of the

project did not proceed at the pace envisaged. While the training programmes commenced in 1980 by placement of registration officials in training courses abroad, the extension of registration activity did not begin, in effect, till 1983. This was mainly due to the serious difficulties in printing of the forms resulting in acute shortages of forms. Another reason was the absence of three key technical personnel on the training referred. As against the targeted 24 million, the actual extension of the civil registration system was as follow:

		Number of Townships	Rural Population	
			millions	per cent
During	1983-85	25	2.7	9.78
During	1984-85	27	3.0	10.87
During	1985-86	26	3.6	13.05
Total		78	9.3	33.70

66. The training component of the project was implemented. Between October 1980 and May 1988, seven senior officials of the Central Statistical Organization were trained. The training was in institutions in the United States, India and the Philippines in population statistics, demographic analysis, civil registration and medical coding. One officer also undertook a study tour. To the extent these programmes resulted in the imparting of better skills and exposing the professionals of the organization to the civil registration systems and practices abroad, this objective of the project can be considered as having been attained.

67. The vehicles and equipment included in the project were delivered within reasonable time. The equipment included facet machines, typewriters, calculators, an offset duplicator and a plate making machine. Part of the problems relating to the shortage of forms could be attributed to the supply of a defective duplicator and plate maker. The supplier, in fact, in 1986 agreed to replace the plate maker free. It was concluded that the equipment that had been supplied would not be able to satisfy the printing requirements of the system.

68. The core objective of the project was not achieved. In retrospect, the reason would seem to have been the very optimistic view that was taken of the capacity and resources of the Central Statistical Organization which was the national implementing agency. During the course of implementation it became apparent that the initial objectives were ambitious, given the lack of institutional strength. The project was also affected by other factors which operated during the period, including frequent changes in the leadership of the Central Statistical Organization which resulted in lack of direction and absence of familiarity with the project on the part of the head of this organization. The delays in project implementation were also due to changes such as the elimination of the services of an advisor, substitution of a

printing press as a new item and conversion of some training fellowships into a study tour. There were also problems regarding maintenance of the two project vehicles and, as an exceptional case, it was agreed in July 1984 that the UNFPA funds could be used for this purpose. Also, the expected staff increases and placements in the Central Statistical Organization did not come through. These factors cumulatively rendered project implementation erratic and slow.

69. The implementation of the project was reviewed in the Tripartite meeting of November 1984, when many of the causes indicated above were identified. It was suggested that it seemed worthwhile to reassess the objectives of the project and determine whether the reconsideration of both project content and inputs was desirable. The redesigning of the forms was also strongly urged, particularly from the point of view of easy adoption for computerized data processing. In view of this fundamental change in approach, it was recommended that the printing of the forms in their current format should be slowed down and efforts made to redesign them. The UNFPA Needs Assessment Mission in 1985 also recommended that the vital statistics system needed improvement as an important source of demographic data ¹¹. The conversion of these ideas into a project proposal took some time and meanwhile the original project continued till 1987-88.

70. The formulation of the new project was begun in November 1986 and was numbered as BUR/86/PO3. It was considered as the second phase of the project discussed above. The project document was finalized in January 1988, renumbered as BUR/88/PO5 and later as MYA/88/PO5. It was planned to commence in January 1988 and be implemented over a period of four years from 1988 to 1991. The project document was signed by government in April 1990.

71. The long range objectives of this project are almost identical to those of the first one. The immediate objectives were to have extended by the end of the project the new vital registration and statistics system to cover 75 per cent of the area of the country or a population of about 29.5 million, and to provide training to the staff concerned. The estimated population of the country as in 1989 was 39.35 million. The targeted population of 29.5 million included the population to which the system had already been extended under the previous project because new formats were proposed to be adopted. The project was to run over a four year period from 1990 to 1993.

72. The project did not envisage any field experimentation. Its components were (i) providing technical expertise for an assessment

¹¹ Report of Mission on Needs Assessment for Population Assistance - Burma; UNFPA, New York, March 1985. Paras 16-18 and 106-111.

of the current system, (ii) training of technical staff and (iii) equipment. The equipment included public address systems, typewriters, printing paper and supplies for the printing equipment already supplied under the previous project. The forms were expected to be printed by the in-house facility of the Central Statistical Office and the data processing was expected to be carried out by the computer centre set up under a separate project.

73. The assessment of the current system was proposed to be carried out by an international expert who would also suggest modifications in the forms and procedures. The formats being used were considered as too cumbersome and not lending themselves to either field convenience or data processing. Also, modifications in the compilation and analysis of the vital statistics data were proposed to be looked into. The expert services were, unfortunately and mainly due to delays in approvals from government, not available till July - August 1992. Meanwhile, the old forms continued to be printed and used. Thus, one of the key objectives of the project, namely the improvement of the system, was not achieved fully. However, to the extent that the Central Statistical Office has before it recommendations for improvement, there has been partial success. The training programmes, which include two study tours, were successfully implemented.

74. The project activities so far as extension of the system was concerned did not proceed as planned due to reasons extraneous to the project, including the situation in the country in 1988. A Tripartite meeting was held in May 1992 for review of the project activities. The target set for 1990 is stated to have been achieved but that the progress thereafter has not been as planned. It was noted that the project would have to be completed by the end of 1992 but that, thereafter, the work would be continued as normal activity, including the extension of the system to new areas.

75. One of the main elements of the second project was the improvement in the forms and procedures. The report of the consultant contains detailed justification for the modifications suggested which result in a reduction of the number of forms, simplify the procedures and make the forms themselves simpler and easier to handle. The modifications also enhance the use of the forms for data processing. However, it would appear that no decision has been taken regarding the adoption of the recommendations. Meanwhile, the old forms and procedures have been continued while extending the area coverage. The compulsions that often operate in project implementation are recognized. However, in retrospect, it would have been preferable to postpone implementation of the project till decisions had been taken on the revised formats and procedures. With the project coming to an end, there has been no perceptible improvement of the civil registration system.

76. The experience of this project would support the view that, after a thorough review of the existing system and its limitations, improvements should first be identified and the adoption of these made preconditions to the commencement of project implementation. In other words, system improvements must be built into the project, even if the project were to be delayed, rather than expect to be able to carry out mid-course enhancements.

BOTSWANA:

BOT/83/PO1 and BOT/88/PO2 -
Strengthening of Civil Registration and Vital
Statistics System - Demonstration Project

BOT/90/PO2 - Strengthening of Civil Registration and Vital
Statistics Systems in Demonstration Areas

77. The initial proposal for a project relating to civil registration and vital statistics in Botswana was made through a draft of a project document prepared in September 1982 by the UN Statistical Office which was later, with some modifications, submitted by the Chief Technical Adviser and Demographer-Analyst in the Census Office of the Government in February 1983. Comments on this proposal were offered by both the Office of the Resident Representative and by the UN Statistical Office. By August 1983 the draft project document had been revised with the long term objective of establishing an improved and efficient method of registration of births and deaths covering the entire population and to produce reliable and timely vital statistics data needed for planning the country's social, economic and health programmes. The immediate objectives were (i) to carry out activities in experimental areas with a view to developing suitable methodologies for improving civil registration and vital statistics, (ii) to train nationals in order to develop their capability to carry out the project activities later at the expansion stage and, (iii) to create awareness of the officials on the need and usefulness of the registration system as well as undertaking mass education programme to motivate the public. It was to be implemented over 33 months from April 1984.

78. The proposal envisaged the reorganization of the Office of the Registrar and the setting up of a national committee on civil registration and vital statistics. After review of the forms and procedures and the making the modifications considered desirable, it was proposed to implement the experimental project in four areas over one year. The proposal in the draft project of August 1983 was to have a consultant for two months at the initial stage of the project to review the forms and procedures and for an advisor to be assigned just before the training and field work were to commence. However, after further discussions, two substantive changes were made in the proposal in July 1984. The first was to field the

expert right from the beginning of the project and, second, to implement the project in two phases. The first phase was to include activities such as a study tour by the Registrar, formation of the national committee, review of the existing legislation, forms and procedures by the international civil registration expert, determination of the experimental areas, organization of the registration offices and preparatory work for launching of the field work. The second phase included training of the intermediate and field personnel, field work to test suggested forms and procedures, and an evaluation followed by a technical review. Both phases were to have a duration of 18 months each.

79. However, in October 1984 further modifications were suggested by the UNFPA on the ground that discussions with government indicated the need for certain changes. In the result, what was suggested was that the study tours and planned fellowships could be implemented and that a four-month consultancy should be fielded early in 1985 to review and crystallizing the government's approach to civil registration and for preparation of the infrastructure, through workshops and local training courses, for the project. The fellowships and study tour were implemented. Incidentally, it must be noted that the government, on their part, established the Civil Registration / Vital Statistics Coordinating Committee in 1984 chaired by the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs and consisting of the representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Health, Social Welfare and Community Development, Information and Broadcasting and Head of the Demography Department of the University of Botswana.

80. The project, as the very process of formulation of the project document as described above will indicate, never got off to an auspicious start. At the early stages it would seem that its funding was doubtful and that this conditioned the rather long drawn out consideration of the draft project document. The achievements have been the establishment of the national committee, the study tour by the then Registrar to Kenya and England, the study tour by some members of the national committee to Kenya, the fellowship of the Deputy Registrar which gave her specialization in civil registration and vital statistics, and the fellowship of the Assistant Registrar for study of records management. The project was not implemented in any substantive sense.

81. There was little progress till the beginning of 1988 when Government expressed its desire to organize training sessions for their personnel and seeking assistance in the organization of the training courses. A consultant was engaged on a short-term basis in September - December 1988 for preparation of a report on training needs and content in relation to civil registration. Funds were also released in October 1988 for the local training programmes. The consultant was also requested to prepare a draft project document for a project on civil registration and vital statistics.

Meanwhile, the project number was updated as BOT/88/PO2. It covered this consultancy and the training programmes.

82. After due consideration, the revised project was approved in July 1990 and signed by government in October 1990. This project was numbered BOT/90/PO2 - Strengthening of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System in Demonstration Areas. It was to be implemented over thirty months with the original starting date as January 1990. The objectives of the project, both long term and immediate, are similar to those in the first project. The immediate objectives are (i) review of the entire civil registration system to assess shortcomings in order to suggest strategies and methods for improvements, (ii) select four model areas where an organization, documents, forms, and schedules will be tested and developed, (iii) review of the existing civil registration laws and regulations as well as existing documents to determine their suitability for the expanded programme, (iv) institute a training programme for the staff of the civil registration head office and pilot areas, and (v) undertake a campaign to create awareness of the benefits and usefulness of vital records and statistics in order to motivate the public to register their vital events. The project was to be implemented by the Registrar of Births and Deaths in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs.

83. The project work plan is divided into the two phases described earlier. The adviser joined in December 1990 and the project activities gathered momentum thereafter. A Tripartite review meeting was held in November 1991. Many of the activities in the first phase had been undertaken such as review of the system and laws, selection of experimental areas, preparation of the formats of the registration forms and supporting manuals, training of some of the staff and discussions with the administrative authorities of the experimental areas. However, there were difficulties due to transfer of staff, vacancies not being filled and the proposed experimental system not yet being approved by government which had also resulted in delays in printing. As a consequence, workshops needed rescheduling as also the activities that followed in the second phase. An extension of the project by six months to take into account this slippage was recommended.

84. The second phase began in June 1992, about six months behind schedule. It was evident that coordination problems were coming up relating to the involvement of health personnel. In this context, though a high level inter-ministry level committee was recommended to be set up at the earlier Tripartite meeting, no formal orders had yet been issued nor was the Coordinating Committee set up earlier reconstituted to raise the level of membership and participation. Two of the registration offices had no proper accommodation or facilities even by July 1992. However, there was no shortage of forms and training of local personnel had been conducted as planned. Equipment provided in the project such as vehicles, photo copying machine, and typewriters had been received.

85. The second Tripartite review meeting of the project was held in November 1992. Further progress in project activities had taken place. Data entry and preparation of relevant statistical tables had commenced in the data processing unit of the Central Statistical Office. Three staff members had been trained in the United Kingdom. A functional unit for civil registration had been constituted in the Registrar's Office, and publicity campaigns were being undertaken which included participation in local community meetings. An extension of the project till the end of 1993 was suggested mainly for, among other activities, the installation of the expected microfilm unit, the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee, planning for the nation-wide expansion of the system, development of a computer link between civil registration records and those relating to civic registration, passports, immigration and citizenship departments. Many of these could reasonably be considered as the direct responsibility of the government as a logical utilization of the experience gained from the project.

86. The structural components which are necessary to ensure government's continuing attention to civil registration activities and which were envisaged in the project have, unfortunately, not been established. These include the inter - ministerial committee, a technical advisory committee and, most important a strong division in the office of the Registrar fully responsible for civil registration and vital statistics. No doubt, a coordinating committee was set up as also a working committee but evidently they have not functioned effectively. In the absence of the high-level inter-ministerial committee the acceptance of the concept that civil registration is not just a statistical exercise nor the exclusive responsibility of the department in charge would not come about. Such an acceptance and consequent involvement would be particularly important in the case of agencies concerned with health, education, women and child welfare, and family planning. The weakness of such institutional links has also been referred to in the Programme Review and Strategy Development Report of the UNFPA¹². The utility of the civil registration system and of vital statistics data in relation to their activities would be better appreciated and their support for the system more likely if these agencies are continuously associated with this activity.

87. The establishment of a strong technical and management unit for civil registration in the office of the Registrar should have been a priority activity. In the absence of such a unit it is very likely that activities relating to civil registration will get "routinized" soon after the completion of the project and the momentum generated dissipated.

¹² Programme Review And Strategy Development Report - Botswana, UNFPA, New York, 1991; Page 64

88. The project, being still under implementation even if in the last stages, has yet to throw up hard data. Also, there has not yet been any analytical reporting of field issues, on the suitability of the forms developed and the procedures, the utility of the tabulation plan, and the coverage achieved within the project areas. While the training programmes have been successfully implemented, no information is available either in qualitative or quantitative terms which would enable any conclusions to be drawn as to how far the objectives have been achieved. At this point of time, therefore, it would only be reasonable to recommend an early evaluation of the project.

YEMEN:

89. The following projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics have been funded by the UNFPA:

- (i) PDY/85/PO8 Strengthening civil registration
- (ii) YEM/81/PO2 Civil registration and Vital Statistics
- (iii) YEM/88/PO1 Strengthening civil registration and vital statistics system
- (iv) YEM/88/026 Development of civil registration system
- (v) YEM/92/PO2 Strengthening and computerization of the civil registration and vital statistics in pilot areas

90. The first one was implemented in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDY) while projects (ii), (iii) and (iv) were implemented in Yemen Arab Republic before the unification of these countries in May 1990. The last project is being implemented in the Republic of Yemen.

PDY/85/PO8 - Strengthening civil registration :

91. An experimental project, PDY/74/PO1, for improvement of the civil registration system was initiated in 1978 to cover about 45 per cent of the population. It was implemented from March 1978 to the end of 1982. However, the project was not considered as having resulted in the establishment of a reliable system of civil registration. The reporting and coverage were not to the level expected. The UNFPA Basic Needs Mission for Population Assistance of 1984¹³ suggested that the coverage and quality of the data collected from the system from 1980 should be evaluated before any analysis of the data was attempted. Such an evaluation would help in determining the corrective measures that would be necessary for improving the system. As a follow up of this recommendation and with a view to strengthening the civil registration system, a new project, PDY/85/PO8 was formulated.

¹³ As quoted in the project document.

92. The project PDY/85/P08 - Strengthening Civil Registration was to commence in January 1986 with a duration of three years. However, due to disturbances in the country in 1986, it was decided that 1986 would be considered an interim year and that the implementation would commence in 1987 and conclude in 1990. The work plan had to be amended, including providing for replacements of assets lost.

93. The project had the long-term objectives of generating reliable statistics through an improvement of the system and to provide vital statistics on a continuous basis for formulation of a population policy. Its immediate objectives were (i) identifying the defects in the existing system to determine where it should be strengthened, (ii) developing a suitable publicity campaign for motivating the people, (iii) increasing the coverage of the system and (iv) providing training to the field staff. Towards achieving these objectives, three main activities were envisaged. These were (i) an evaluation survey in selected areas to identify the defects in the system, (ii) a consultancy mission for developing a publicity campaign for civil registration, including a school education programme and (iii) measures for expediting coding and processing of the data generated by the system. The national implementing agency was the Civil Registration Department in the Ministry of Justice.

94. The choice of the expert for the planning and conduct of the survey took some time. It was ultimately decided towards the middle of 1987 to nominate a national expert drawn from within the government. The expert was in position from January 1988 to the end of 1989. The survey was conducted in August 1988. Its results indicated that the 69.5 per cent of births and 52.1 per cent of deaths were registered and that, while knowledge of the law seemed widespread, difficulties persisted due to not enough registration centres within convenient distances, lack of clerical staff and lack of any particular benefits of registration.

95. The consultancy for developing the publicity campaign was not implemented. Instead, local expertise was inducted. The measures for coding and processing of the data were also developed by national expertise drawn from the Department of Statistics. The involvement of national expertise to the extent possible has been a desirable feature of this project and worthy of consideration in other projects too.

96. The progress of the project was reviewed at the Tripartite meeting of February 1988. Some of the activities had progressed fairly well such as the opening of a few new registration offices, the group training of the officials involved and publicity measures. The group training included participants from the civil registration department, mass media and information agencies as well as social welfare agencies. Though not a direct result of project implementation but doubtless a consequence of increasing

attention, the Civil Registration authority was housed in a new building with sufficient space for storage and room for the microfilm equipment. A mission carried out in February 1988 recorded that there had been an increase in the registered births over previous levels mainly due to publicity campaigns.

97. A second Tripartite meeting was held in March 1989. The envisaged survey had been completed and this must be considered as one objective of the project having been achieved successfully. Group training was continued. Some difficulties with regard to wrong supply of equipment such as storage cupboards were noticed but these were not of such a nature as to impede the implementation of the project. Despite the generally optimistic assessment of the project at this point of time, it is evident that the system was under some strain. In particular, disastrous rains hampered the work in some areas. It was, therefore, recommended that the project be extended till the end of 1990.

98. The third Tripartite review meeting was held in January 1990. The results of the survey were discussed and it was recommended that more registration centres were necessary if the system was to improve in terms of coverage. Local training had been conducted as planned and microfilming of the records had commenced. The only activity that had not made any progress was the processing of data on the computer system that had been supplied. The computer system had not functioned from the beginning and this had caused quite some difficulty in data processing.

99. A major political development had, meanwhile, taken place. By the Aden Declaration of November 1989 the two countries of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic were to be unified from November 1990 (the unification took place in May 1990). The implications of this development were considered at the Tripartite review meeting held in November 1990 when the associated projects in Yemen were also reviewed. The need to integrate the systems in the two countries which would include a review of the systems, their legal basis and other issues implied that the extension of the project in its present form was unrealistic. It was correctly, therefore, decided to recommend an evaluation of the project along with the projects YEM/88/PO1 and YEM/88/026. However, since it is always desirable to upgrade skills, it was suggested that a fellowship in the use of computers in civil registration be approved for implementation in 1991. Operational activities of the project were over, therefore, by the end of 1991.

100. The training component of the project was successfully implemented. Three study tours to the United Kingdom, Kenya and Jordan were arranged, the last relating to computerization of civil registration data. Fellowships were also implemented to three countries. The important issue with regard to such training would be whether the persons have benefitted from the training and

whether their skills are being utilized in the areas of specialization in the department. Similar questions would be relevant with regard to the training of civil registration staff and the group training referred to earlier. The content and impact of local training is not reflected in the Tripartite reviews or in other documentation. It is, therefore, difficult to arrive at any reasonable conclusion regarding their utility in relation to the effective continuity of the civil registration system.

101. Of the three specific activities, the investigative survey has been successfully completed, but how far the other two, namely intensified publicity and measures for coding and editing of data have been achieved would depend on an evaluation of the coverage of the registration system and the reliability of the information collected. However, to the extent that a foundation has been laid, it could be said that these activities have been partly achieved.

102. The civil registration project in the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen has had a fairly long duration from 1978. One would have to limit consideration of the status of the system to a point of time just before integration to assess the impact of the projects. The broad objectives of the project can at best be said to have been partially achieved. The translation of the results of the investigative survey into action for continuous improvement of the system has still to be made. The results of the survey have no doubt been considered in the Tripartite reviews but there is no indication that there has been a detailed review of the results to determine what administrative action has to be taken to improve the system - which was the purpose of the survey. Thus, while the objective has been achieved in terms of performance, its long term utility has not yet been demonstrated.

YEM/81/PO2 - Civil registration and Vital Statistics:

103. The Civil Registration Act was promulgated in September 1976 but effective steps for its enforcement commenced only after 1980. To assist the government in establishing the system on a firm basis, this project was developed between 1977 and 1981. The objectives of the project were to (i) assist in preparing the required regulations for the establishment of a civil registration system and (ii) help in organizing the central Department for Civil Registration in the design of registration forms and to test the system in selected urban and rural areas. The activities in the project, among others, included experimentation in the capital Sana'a and in six rural areas to try out different methods and agencies for collecting and registering information on vital events. There was also an accent on public information. An adviser was provided for the implementation of the project which was to run over two years from June 1981 to June 1983.

104. Registration activities were carried out in the capital Sana'a and in six selected rural areas. The project was reviewed in the

Tripartite meeting of May 1983 when it was concluded that the primary objectives of the project had been achieved and that, therefore, its extension was unnecessary. The main objectives referred to were the organization of the central unit and the experimental experience gained. At the conclusion of the project the central civil registration office and a registration sub-office in each Governorate had been established, and a central pilot registry organized in the head office. The regulations and rules that governed registration procedures had been formulated and the registration forms had been developed. The Chief Registrar of Sana'a and a few other officials underwent training in Jordan and Egypt.

105. However, an assessment made in March 1983 by the adviser indicated that the level of registration was poor. Two causes identified for this result were that the publicity campaign was very weak due to paucity of funds and, secondly, that there was no motivation to register since birth and death certificates were not required for any purpose. The expansion to new areas, though contemplated, was discouraged and not implemented. The project could, nevertheless, be credited with initiating the registration system in the country.

YEM/88/PO1 - Civil Registration and Vital Statistics:

106. It was recognized that while the previous project had succeeded in establishing the civil registration system in its basic form, the system was quite deficient in terms of coverage or validity of information. By the end of 1988, out of 205 Nahyas, registration offices were established in only 23. The coverage was assessed as 11 per cent in terms of area or 6 per cent in terms of families. Further assistance to strengthen the system was, therefore, considered necessary and, accordingly, this project was developed.

107. The long-term objectives of the project were to develop a sound system of vital and migration statistics to provide reliable information for planning and to provide to individuals legal proof of identity for ensuring their rights. The immediate objectives were to (i) to evaluate the present system of civil registration and vital statistics, (ii) strengthen the central management capabilities through improving inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination, publicity programmes, training programmes, (iii) assist, in particular, in strengthening the registration system in the three Governorates, including the capital Sana'a, and (iv) develop a system of generating vital and migration statistics. It was also envisaged that the project would, as incidental to its main objectives, help in developing the family and personal identity card systems in the three selected Governorates. It was proposed to be implemented over 30 months with an original starting date of March 1988. The Civil Registration Department of the Ministry of Interior was the government implementing agency.

108. The project included two consultancies and one expert adviser. The first consultancy of three months duration was to be at the very commencement of the implementation of the project for (i) the purpose of evaluating the present organizational set-up and suggest modifications, (ii) study the administrative aspects of control and supervision and suggest an alternative or a modification if necessary, (iii) review the legal provisions of the present system in order to suggest modifications to the laws to facilitate the procedures evolved, and (iv) to study the present procedure of transmission of vital statistics to the Department of Statistics and to look into ways and means of improving the flow of data between the two agencies involved. The second consultancy was to be halfway through the project for the conduct of an evaluation survey. The first consultancy was implemented between November 1988 and February 1989. The second consultancy did not come off because the evaluation survey envisaged in the project was not conducted.

109. The civil registration expert was to be associated with the project for a longer term. The expert was expected to (i) assist government in reviewing the present civil registration law (1976) and introduce amendments in the law and the regulations governing civil registration procedures, (ii) develop the procedures in order to simplify the operations of the system, (iii) study the design and content of the registers and forms used in the system and the necessary changes in order to develop their final formats, (iv) select adequate standard codes and prepare training manuals for field workers, (v) assist in development of vital statistics based on the civil registration data, (vi) train national personnel in the collection and compilation of vital statistics, (vii) study current procedures of transmission of vital statistics to the Department of Statistics and consider ways and means of improving the flow of data between the two agencies or suggest alternative ways of processing the vital statistics in order to enhance feedback to the system, and (viii) identify priority applications for computerization of civil registration operations. The expert was associated with the project from March 1990 to May 1991.

110. It is apparent that the terms of reference of the expert overlap to a considerable degree those of the first consultancy referred to above. In fact, since the expert joined the project only in March 1990, the report of the first consultancy was already available. However, it is understood that the ideas generated in the first consultancy were not utilized to an optimum extent before the arrival of the expert in March 1990. Therefore, the expert was able to build upon these recommendations. The terminal report of the expert indicated that there were no major changes in formats or procedures and that what was sought to be achieved was the improvement of the system, including elimination of duplicate registers and reduction of forms.

111. The project was reviewed at the Tripartite meeting held in January 1990. The number of registration offices had been increased

by 49 during the years 1988 and 1989. This was a good pace compared with the opening of only 23 during the entire period 1983 to 1987. The training had also progressed satisfactorily.

112. The next Tripartite review meeting was held in November 1990. By this time the unification had taken place and, consequently, the preparation of the unified law and regulations acquired priority. These were formulated for consideration of government. The forms and procedures had been reviewed and were being finalized but they had not been tested.

113. The final Tripartite review meeting was held in November 1991. The organizational objectives were assessed as having been achieved, including the formulation of the unified law which had been promulgated. Further registration offices had been opened.

114. The training component was successfully implemented. Ten officials were trained in Tunisia, three senior officers were on a study tour to Egypt, and local training was organized by the expert who was associated with the project.

115. The project was intended to establishing and running registries in the three pilot areas of Greater Sana'a area (including Sana'a Governorate Centre), and the Governorate Centres of Taiz and Al-Hodeidah. As mentioned earlier, there were no major changes in forms or procedures. In other words, the experimentation was on administrative implementation of the system with a view to determining appropriate management practices which would ensure an efficient civil registration system. However, it is understood that the experimentation in the three pilot areas did not take place. The review meetings, including the final one, unfortunately do not indicate the progress of this activity or why it was not undertaken. It would, therefore, be valid to say that the objectives of testing and improvement of the system have not been achieved.

116. The project has some creditable achievements. The drafting of the unified law and getting it adopted and promulgated is an important step forward. The forms and procedures have been finalized and are capable of adoption nation-wide. The training programmes have imparted skills to the staff. The main offices have been established. The equipment included in the project was received and is available for use as the system expands. However, the main objective which was to determine appropriate management practices for the improvement of the system was not achieved. This included, as the discussion of the next project would indicate, the determination of the systems of processing of the data too. The core objective of system improvement was not attained.

YEM/88/026 - Development of Civil Registration System:

117. This project, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was intended to complement the UNFPA project YEM/88/PO1 discussed above. The intention was to develop an overall plan of improvement of the civil registration system which would cover all aspects such as the organization for collection of information on vital events, the appropriate formats of the reporting forms from the point of view of not only recording of information but also facilitating data entry, and computerization of data processing. This project, therefore, had the objectives of (i) assisting in the review of the law, regulations, system procedures towards simplifying them and providing training and, (ii) identifying the priority areas for computerization of the civil registration operations and preparation of a feasibility report based on a study of the current status of the use of computers in the civil registration system and future requirements. The latter was intended to provide the necessary information for the formulation of a realistic project for computerization of the civil registration and vital statistics system.

118. The objectives of the project necessarily implied very close coordination of its activities with those of the project YEM/88/PO1 discussed above. The first objective was very much part of the latter project. The funding of the civil registration expert were shared between the two projects - nine months by this project and three months by YEM/88/PO1. As discussed earlier, the framework of the system was determined under the latter project, even if not tried out. To that extent, the first objective has been partially achieved. The achievement can only be considered partial because the system that was developed had not been tried out and the modifications that may have been necessitated by the requirements of computerization not determined.

119. The other objective of preparation of a feasibility study regarding the scope of computerization of the civil registration system was not attained. The expert included in the project was not fielded and no internal assessment seems to have attempted even as a preliminary exercise. The project has, therefore, not been successfully implemented.

YEM/92/PO2 - Strengthening and Computerization of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Pilot Areas:

120. At the time of integration, two systems operated in the country under different laws and agencies. The new law was issued in 1991 and the Department of Civil Registration of the Ministry of Interior was designated as the agency in charge of civil registration. The systems in the former two regions also operated at different levels of efficiencies in terms of coverage and validity of data. In the northern region, where the Department of Civil Registration of the Ministry of Interior was the agency,

about 20 per cent of births and 10 per cent of deaths were estimated as being registered. In the southern region, where the Ministry of Justice was responsible for overseeing the system, 65 per cent of births and 55 per cent of deaths were estimated as being registered. Therefore, in neither of the two regions was the coverage full or even to an adequate level. On a review of the status of civil registration in the country, the Programme Review and Strategy Development Report of the UNFPA, while emphasizing the importance of the civil registration system as an important source of data for population programmes, stated that "the need for improvement of the civil registration system is pressing. The cost of computerization and training ...may be high but arguably justified if the government wants a strong vital and civil registration system. Improvement of this statistical resource will require international assistance, both in terms of financial and technical support" ¹⁴. Against this background, it was considered desirable to develop and support a further project on civil registration. This project was approved in August 1992.

121. The long-term objectives of the project are (i) to ensure accurate and complete registration of population and vital events, (ii) to computerize the civil registration system, (iii) to strengthen the capabilities of the national staff of the Department of Civil Registration and other related ministries so that the activities of registration are carried out properly in the future, (iv) to produce reliable and timely vital statistics needed for planning socio-economic and health programmes and for the newly adopted population policy programme, and (v) to create a database of statistics on marriages and divorces for studying their effects on fertility, childhood mortality and population growth and for policy making and in-depth analysis in this field.

122. The immediate objectives are (i) select six pilot areas where all the civil registration activities would be carried out intensively including computerization, (ii) introduction of computerization in the pilot areas as an experiment for future expansion, (iii) institute a training programme in civil registration for the staff in the main office, other ministries and the pilot area through fellowships and in-country programmes, (iv) institute a training programme in the use of computers in the field of civil registration and vital statistics, (v) undertake a publicity campaign to create awareness of the benefits and usefulness of civil registration and vital statistics to motivate the public to register vital events, (vi) by the end of the project to have reached full coverage of registration of the population and vital events (including marriages and divorces), in the pilot areas, and (vii) by the end of the project to have produced vital

¹⁴. Programme Review and Strategy Development Report - Republic of Yemen, 1991, UNFPA, New York (draft). Page 46.

statistics for the pilot areas in close cooperation and coordination with the Central Statistical Organization.

123. Both the long-term and immediate objectives are impressive in their scope. Taken together, they can be summarized as three main objectives, all relating to the six pilot areas proposed in the project. These are (i) the strengthening of civil registration activities (ii) attempting computerization of some of the activities and (iii) attempting to generate vital statistics. These are not very different from those of the previous projects.

124. The project is to be implemented in six pilot areas. It provides for three consultancies. The first is for a consultant on civil registration and vital statistics for selection of the six pilot areas and for formulation of a detailed internal work plan. Towards the conclusion of the project, the consultant, hopefully the same, is expected to return to evaluate the results of the project and recommend further extension of the system, if justified. The other consultancy is regarding computer applications and training the staff in the adoption of computerization. This consultancy will be over short durations during the life of the project.

125. The first consultancy was implemented in January - February 1993. The other activities of the project are, therefore, poised for take-off. The computer consultant would be a national. This, as mentioned earlier, is a worthwhile choice.

126. The project has been initiated very recently and, therefore, no view can be taken regarding its implementation. However, if the projects are taken together, it will be noticed that attempts to establish and improve the civil registration system have been made over quite a long time. Yet, as the justification for the project YEM/92/PO2 presented in the project document indicates, no substantial progress appears to have been made in establishing the system, quite apart from whether it is functioning satisfactorily or not. The latter is directly related to the motivations within government to expand, sustain and support the system. The installation of the system "on the ground" would have been a reasonable expectation from these projects taken together. It would seem eminently desirable for a technical evaluation of these projects to be carried out at the conclusion of the current one before further activities are envisaged.

III. CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS PROJECTS - GENERAL ISSUES

General conclusions from the case studies:

127. The components and implementation of the projects considered in the previous chapter are generally typical of the projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics funded by the UNFPA. It would, therefore, be useful to derive some general conclusions from the experience of these projects which would help in taking a view on the content, scope and format of future projects in this area of activity.

128. It would be difficult to conclude that civil registration projects have been clear successes unless their long-term objectives are at least within attainment in a reasonable time frame. However, they cannot be said to have been total failures since they would have had some impact, however minimal. The question would be whether such minimal achievements would be acceptable from the point of view of both the objectives of the projects and the cost-effectiveness of the funds invested in them. Therefore, to be able to draw some reasonable conclusions regarding the impact of these projects, it would be useful to review them on the basis of some broader criteria which would be helpful in determining as objectively as possible their effectiveness and impact. The broad criteria would, among others, include (i) have at least the minimum objectives been achieved, which would include the immediate objectives set for the project, (ii) have the national staff been trained so that a core of expertise is available; (iii) has there been a contribution to the overall improvement of the national civil registration system concerned, (iv) has an efficient system of civil registration been established as a result of the project and (v) if the system has not been well established, at least has a momentum been generated which might sustain the activity. These are not necessarily independent criteria and, together, attempt to answer the question whether there has been any long-term impact in the country concerned in this area of activity.

129. The immediate objectives have, in most cases, been largely attained. These mainly relate to completion of field activity, preparation of documentation for training, training of local staff and, in many cases, preparing the draft law. The attainment of some of the functional objectives has not always been easy or within the time frame set in the original work plans. This has usually been due to reasons beyond the control of the implementing agencies, including constraints of government funding, new political developments and similar causes. It must, however, be noted that the attainment of the immediate objectives in terms of the work plan is not, by itself, indicative of successful implementation. Unless there has been an evaluation of the results of the activities relating to the immediate objectives soon after the

conclusion of the project, the reliability and convenience of the model system developed and the utility of other recommendations would not be determined. The experience of the project may not always be capable of being replicated all over the country. This would be particularly so in cases where the inputs in the project have been heavy in terms of transport vehicles, equipment, allowances, etc. The scale of such inputs is generally higher than what would normally be provided in the absence of external funding. It is important, therefore, for the results of the project to be evaluated from the point of view of its replicability by the national government. It is, therefore, recommended that a project should be evaluated on its conclusion before further project activities are planned.

130. The training component has generally been successfully implemented. Among other factors, the interest in implementation by the beneficiaries of training programmes would, doubtless, have played an important part. The training imparted through the project would have had two beneficial results. The first is that it would have established or enhanced the technical skills of the professional staff through training in institutions abroad or study tours. Minimum professional expertise would have been established. The second benefit would be the training of national staff in large numbers who would constitute the necessary corps of trainers when the system is expanded. While the full utilization of this expertise is dependent on the sustained attention to the civil registration system that the government devotes, the benefits from the training component of these projects can be considered as both positive and long-term.

131. The establishment of a civil registration system or improvement of the existing one on a national scale is one of the long-term objectives of these projects. What the projects have demonstrated is how the system could be established or improved. It is doubtless the responsibility of the national government to use the experience of the project, extend the system demonstrated and establish it nationally. However, it would be relevant to consider whether the project has created the necessary awareness in government and among policy makers of the utility of a civil registration system which would eventually ensure the establishment of the system. Except in the Kenya project, there has been little attention to strengthening the inter-ministerial and inter-agency linkages between the national agency implementing the project and related agencies. No doubt committees have been set up in the initial stages but these have almost never been active. This has resulted in the project being looked at in most cases as a departmental responsibility and not as a step forward in improving a system that provides information of great utility to other official agencies, strengthens the statistical system, and includes benefits to the individual person. In this sense, it would not be possible to say, with any degree of confidence, that the utility of

the civil registration system has been demonstrated or established by implementation of the projects reviewed.

132. The establishment of the civil registration system on a firm footing, based on the experience of a project, admittedly would take time and resources. It would be dependent on the appreciation within government of the utility of the system and the reflection of this appreciation in terms of budgetary allocations and staff enhancements over a reasonable time frame. It is quite apparent that this appreciation and interest rapidly diminish after the termination of the projects, often even resulting in deterioration of the experimental system in the pilot areas. In most cases, the projects cannot be said to have generated significant momentum which would ensure the expansion and eventual establishment of an improved national system.

133. The projects have made useful contributions to the overall improvements of the civil registration systems inasmuch as model systems have been developed and demonstrated. But they cannot be said to have had the impact hoped for in terms of permanent improvement or even generating the necessary momentum for sustained action for establishment of the system over time. In view of the fact that the results of the projects have generally not been followed up by the national governments, their contribution towards overall improvement of the systems can only be said to have been partial.

Rationale for continued UNFPA funding for civil registration projects:

134. The preceding assessment of the contribution of projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics to the overall improvement of the system in a country would indicate that the results have generally not matched objectives and expectations. In the light of this experience it would be relevant to consider some important general issues relating to the formulation, funding and implementation of such projects in order to be able to determine whether this is an activity in which further funding would be useful and worthwhile. If the funding of projects in this activity is considered useful, questions such as whether their scope and content could continue as at present or whether these would merit a second look or whether any fundamental changes would be necessary would have to be considered.

135. The funding by the UNFPA of projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics is sanctioned by the general guidelines that have been adopted by it for support to data

collection activities¹⁵. The relevant parts of these guidelines relating to civil registration and vital statistics are reproduced in Annex 3.

136. Given the general experience of the projects that there has been no perceptible long-term improvement in the systems in most countries, it would be necessary to consider whether the funding by the UNFPA of projects in this activity should be continued at all. Birth or death certificates, to the extent they are necessary for exercising a civil right, are entitlements that the government would have to ensure. Again, the meeting of information needs on population parameters for development planning is well within the normal administrative capacity of government. It could, therefore, be argued that the establishment of a civil registration system is clearly the responsibility of the national government and not that of the UNFPA. However, the UNFPA has a mandate with regard to issues concerned with population growth in balance with resources. To translate this mandate into action plans and programmes, particularly those relating to maternal and child health, infant mortality, family planning and women's welfare, information on the levels, trends of change, migration, fertility, infant and maternal mortality, and other facets of population is essential. It would be imperative to be able to understand and continually assess the population situation at all area levels. Such information is essential input in the formulation of policies within its mandate. It would, therefore, have to recognize the need for ensuring the availability of reliable flow statistics rather than depending on ad hoc surveys which, at best, are temporary measures to obtain sporadic information to fill what would remain, in the absence of established systems of generating information, permanent gaps.

137. The rationale for support to projects relating to civil registration is the recognition, in the guidelines, that population data are indispensable for effective social and economic planning and for the formulation and implementation of population policies. Such data are also essential for the integration of population variables into development planning. It is in this context that support to the establishment of a reliable system of civil registration and vital statistics in a country is, along with other activities such as population censuses and sample surveys, considered desirable.

138. The recognition by the UNFPA of the importance of population data in policy-making is reiterated in an assessment of 21 years of

¹⁵ Guidelines for UNFPA Support to Basic Data Collection Activities, UNFPA Handbook of Policy Guidelines, Basic Data Collection, Pages I-1 to I-11. UNFPA, New York.

its activity¹⁶. It is noted that planners need population data to assess and monitor demographic trends, to design and evaluate population policies and programmes, and to integrate population factors in all major socio-economic development programmes. In particular, the need for flow data for monitoring population changes at various area levels is considered important. Such data would be provided by the civil registration system through the vital statistics it would generate. If reliable and complete information of this nature has to be available, the establishment of an effective national civil registration and vital statistics system would be essential.

139. Its responsibility in fostering the establishment and improvement of civil registration systems, among other data gathering activities, is clearly recognized by the UNFPA in the Policy Guidelines and in other declarations. This is, in turn, indicative of the recognition of the benefits that accrue from a well established system of civil registration. These have been succinctly presented elsewhere¹⁷. The system has multiple benefits. The civil registration records serve a variety of purposes for the individual and for society. They meet numerous civil needs and administrative requirements. The vital statistics that the system generates permits the compilation of continuous series of data and provides flow statistics on important population parameters from the smallest civil administrative unit which is a feature unique to this data collection system. The system provides information for population estimates and projections, cohort studies and construction of life tables. Vital statistics are basic for the computation of health and mortality indices, including infant and child mortality. The information on "causes of death" that the system generally provides is valuable for monitoring of health conditions at small area levels. Public health programmes would rely on mortality statistics available from the system. Maternal and child health care programmes can be planned, monitored and more effectively implemented by the availability of data on births, foetal deaths, maternal and infant deaths from the system. The fertility data it provides are useful in the administration of family planning programmes. It thus serves as a management tool in the implementation of programmes in these areas.

140. The importance of the civil registration system in relation to the mandate of the UNFPA is evident. The activity should not be considered as of low priority and, therefore, not deserving of

¹⁶ Population Policies and Programmes - Lessons Learned from Two Decades of Experience, UNFPA, New York, 1991; Pages 36 - 54

¹⁷ Handbook of Vital Statistics Systems and Methods, Volume I - Legal, organizational and technical aspects, United Nations, New York, 1991; No. E.91.XVII.5, Chapter II.

support. It would be most unfortunate if the support now sanctioned by the Guidelines is curtailed or, worse, given up. The benefit of investment in this activity must be judged in relation to UNFPA's interest in the broader aspects of health, family planning, women's welfare and child survival. It would be taking too restrictive a view if the investment in these projects is looked at purely from the narrow point of view of returns on investment or even by the yardstick of attainment or non-achievement of limited project objectives. Therefore, taking into consideration the utility of the civil registration system for the development of policies and programmes dealing with the study or amelioration of current population issues and as an effective management tool in the implementation of these programmes, apart from the individual or administrative benefits that accrue from the system, it is strongly recommended that UNFPA should continue to encourage and support projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics¹⁸.

Implementation through demonstration projects:

141. While urging that the support to these projects should not be curtailed or, for that matter, given up, it is recognized that the concern expressed about the cost effectiveness of the investment so far made in these projects has validity. As the analysis presented earlier indicates, the basic objectives of establishing a reliable civil registration system and its expansion on the conclusion of a project has not been attained. It would, therefore, be necessary to consider, in the light of the experience gained so far, (i) whether the scope and content of these projects need reconsideration and, if so, what would seem possible improvements, and (ii) in continuing to fund these projects, should the principles guiding such funding have to be different?

142. The main aims of UNFPA funding for establishing or improving basic data collection activities are to develop a continuing national capacity to collect, analyze, use and publish population data and, for this purpose, support institution building at national level and development of expertise and managerial capacity. In relation to civil registration systems, this approach would be translated in project terms to funding for providing technical assistance for pilot projects, training programmes, communication and publicity activities, equipment and related costs. It also includes the funding of evaluation studies to determine accuracy, completeness and coverage which would indicate the reliability and utility of the system. It would also envisage funding of inter-regional and regional activities of technical backstopping, training and preparation of technical documentation.

¹⁸ Obviously, the total cost of establishing a civil registration system nation-wide cannot be funded by the UNFPA. This would clearly be a national responsibility.

143. The civil registration projects have been formulated within the framework of these guidelines in terms of strategy and components. Consequently, they have all been demonstration projects in pilot areas and have emphasized the statistical importance of the system. It would be useful to consider whether the demonstration or pilot area approach is useful or whether it has lost its utility?

144. Civil registration projects have usually involved the revision of reporting forms and procedures of collection of information, use of various agencies to determine the most efficient one, changes in methods of transmission of records and their storage, improvements in data processing procedures and analytical techniques, and in the methods of dissemination and use of the vital statistics available from the system. Where a system already exists and specially where there is none, there are advantages in trying out the modifications or innovations that are introduced through the project in an experimental form in pilot areas. This would reduce the costs of experimentation and permit such changes as may be necessary to be made before the innovations are built into the national system. In other words a "pilot study is carried out to examine the feasibility of introducing a change such as new recommendations or procedures, its potential efficiency and contribution to quality. It may be used to examine new modes of registration, data flow, data processing innovations, etc"¹⁹. It is a mechanism to experiment on a manageable scale.

145. The demonstration approach had been faulted on the ground that it often competes with an existing system, resulting in confusion and disruption of the latter. However, this situation is not insurmountable. Through proper administrative arrangements, such as having the new forms notified in the experimental area and withdrawing the old ones, as has been done in some cases, the likely disruption of the existing system need not occur. Also, it is relevant to note that a demonstration project is generally introduced only where the existing system is not functioning at all. The fault in these demonstration pilot projects would seem to be more in the support given to them in terms of vehicles and other inputs which are clearly beyond the scale that the national government can afford when it contemplates extension of the improved system all over the country.

146. Demonstration projects have traditionally been tried out in small areas on a pilot scale²⁰. The choice of the pilot area is

¹⁹ Handbook of Vital Statistics Systems and Methods, Vol I, United Nations, New York, 1991; No. E.91.XVII.5 Page 63

²⁰ It is inappropriate to call these "area projects" since they are not unique to the area in which they are being implemented. The appropriate nomenclature would be just

usually on very valid considerations of convenience of access and supervision but the expectation is that the results of the pilot exercise would generally be capable of adoption elsewhere. Such pilot projects permit testing out procedures and management practices, data processing or record maintenance, training procedures of local staff, etc, at minimum cost. These activities, if tested in a small area to start with, would not be disruptive of the existing system. Aspects such as these particularly lend themselves for experimentation through demonstration projects either in a pilot area or in the head office of the registration authority.

147. The demonstration approach continues to be a useful mechanism for testing out innovations. However, its adoption could be subject to certain conditions. It would be useful in situations where there is no civil registration system at all which would be a rarity, or where the implementation of the existing system is very weak. It would be useful for trying out procedural innovations for improvement of management of the system or when new technologies of record preservation and retrieval or for data processing are introduced. Training methods and documentation would also lend themselves to pilot studies. It is, therefore, recommended that the demonstration approach should be considered as a valid method but its adoption to be dependent on the specific components and objectives of a project.

The need for national commitment:

148. As noted earlier, the projects which have sought to establish or improve civil registration and vital statistics systems have only attained limited success. Most of them have achieved their immediate goal of developing and demonstrating a system capable of adoption on a national scale but none of them has achieved the goal of nation-wide extension of the system. There seem to be two reasons for this. The first is that governments have not evinced any interest in expanding the system after the termination of a project and, second, the projects themselves have been built on fragile ground.

149. Among the many factors that influence the growth and strength of a civil registration and vital statistics system, the most important is the priority assigned to it by government. In many countries very little recognition is accorded to the utility and importance of the system despite the fact that in most cases both the enabling legislation and the infrastructure exist. There are a number of reasons for this. The most important reason would seem to be the lack of the appreciation of the utility of the system and of

"demonstration" or "pilot" projects. The fact that they are being tried out in a small area is a matter of good operational judgment and financial prudence.

the information it provides, for administrative and development purposes and of the legal benefits it would confer on the individual. No doubt the gap in information is perceived but is sought to be temporarily met through ad hoc surveys and other sources. The concept that this system is not a routine single-objective activity but one that provides underpinning to almost all development programmes, including health and educational services, in which population variables are inputs, is not always prevalent. Consequently, it is usually considered as the sole responsibility of the agency to which it is assigned. Also, in many countries, different activities of the system are the responsibility of different agencies, resulting in varying perceptions of the utility of the system. This structure also influences the scale of budgetary support given to the system within government.

150. There is also no pressure on government from the public to maintain the system efficiently because of the absence of any stipulated requirement of vital records for various purposes such as birth certificates for school admissions, as proof of age for purposes such as driving licences, passports, etc, or of death certificates for burial purposes, inheritance claims, etc. It is relevant to note that where internal needs have arisen, such as the need to update population registers for various purposes of internal administration such as the issue of identity cards, some governments have evinced a greater interest in the development of the system than elsewhere. In the absence of a desire to meet a felt internal need or outside pressure through a perceived public benefit, the system does not, generally speaking, receive the support it deserves.

151. It is against this backdrop that most of the projects have been designed. Thus, from the start, the extension of the system developed through an experimental project would be unlikely. As experience has shown, this is what has happened. The pressures that operate while formulating a project must be recognized. The expert or consultant assigned for preparing the project document has more often than not to develop a project because of a request from government or a recommendation in assessment missions and, therefore, to consider whether a project is necessary or whether it should be undertaken only after certain preconditions have been met is not within his/her mandate. Also, the time for preparation of a project document is often not enough for detailed consideration of the various parameters that matter, including the ability of the implementing structures to carry out and, more important, extend the project. In the result, the project document tends to be traditional in scope and overly optimistic.

152. It is, therefore, recommended that the degree of national commitment should be assessed before a project is planned and such commitment be considered a basic requirement for funding and implementation of the project. The degree of national commitment could be assessed through the diagnostic study suggested later.

Desirable preconditions to project formulation and implementation:

153. The question would be whether a better framework could be devised which would, hopefully, hold out some assurance of more productive, long-term returns on the funds invested in a project. Two recommendations could be made towards this end. These would be (i) that a pre-project assessment be made to determine if any pre-conditions have to be satisfied before a project is envisaged, and (ii) limit the project to specific activities which the assessment may identify as priority areas for improvement.

154. The pre-project assessment would, in fact, be a diagnostic study of the existing system to understand its structure and identify its structural strengths or weaknesses. It would help in establishing criteria for funding of a project and in stipulating the action that the government may have to take as pre-project activity. Such an assessment would establish how far there is, as the UNFPA Guidelines desire as a requirement, national commitment to these activities. The preconditions could include the following:

1.
 - i) Is there a designated division or unit in the agency responsible for this activity so that undivided attention would be paid to both the project and, later, the improvement of the national system? Such a division or unit must be established as a precondition.
 - ii) Is its staff structure sufficient for the purpose? If not, it would have to be established and staffed before the project is formulated. It must, in fact, be associated with project formulation.
 - iii) Has this division or unit been assigned a reasonably important place in the administrative structure of the agency? Is the head of the division or unit part of the higher management level? It would be necessary to ensure that this division or unit has a hierarchical advantage in terms of decision making, access to the Head of the agency concerned and ability to liaise with other official agencies.
2.
 - i) What would be the specific hierarchies that would constitute the registration system?
 - ii) What are the mechanisms for their effective administration? This would be important in cases where the same organization does not exercise both administrative and technical control.
 - iii) In particular, what is the mechanism to ensure coordination between different departments that may be directly involved - as, for example, the Statistics Department and the Health Department, the Computer

Organization, etc. Such mechanisms must be established before the project begins.

3.
 - i) Is the system tied in organizationally with related government functions such as population registers, issue of identity cards, entitlement to welfare benefits, etc? Since such links are to the advantage of the system in terms of government's support, they could be encouraged, even if not within the mandate for funding.
 - ii) Is there a recognition within government of the importance and utility of the system in fields other than statistical, such as health, education, general administrative uses as proof of civil status, etc? If not, this would have to be developed first through establishment of high-level committees, orientation workshops, and demonstration of uses of vital statistics.
4.
 - i) Is there a perceived need in the public for the system? In other words, is a vital record such as birth certificate, death certificate or certificate of other vital event required to be produced for any official purpose?
 - ii) If so, could the system be strengthened further by identifying additional purposes for which these would be necessary?
 - iii) If there is no such requirement, or if additional purposes can be identified, would the government consider introducing such stipulations, obviously with safeguards against harassment and provisions for late registration? It would be of great advantage if such stipulations are notified before the project is commenced.
5. Are there any evident structural weaknesses that would need emphasis? These may relate to aspects such as the existence or absence of legislation for registration, minimum professional strength of the organization, mechanisms for internal training of professionals and other staff including the field staff for periodic improvement of skills, methods and procedures for registration, data processing, records maintenance, etc. The identification of such weaknesses would help in developing projects with specific objectives or even, in some cases, of limiting the project to the removal of just one or more of these weaknesses.
6. To what extent is national expertise available for implementing the project, either with or without the assignment of full time or intermittent international experts? Would the strengthening of such expertise be

sufficient, with the establishment of the other preconditions referred to above?

7. Have the budgetary allocations for this activity been reasonably sufficient over the years and would there be reasonable assurance of the government being able to continue and enhance the level of funding?

155. It is recommended that an assessment of this type be carried out before a project document is attempted. The advantage would be that the preconditions which might assist in achieving the long-term objectives of the project can be first suggested for implementation by the government concerned as a reflection of its commitment to the system and not merely to the project.

156. If the criteria for initiation of a project, as delineated above, are met before project implementation is commenced, it is likely that the considerable time and effort currently taken up for establishing basic internal structures would be saved. Given these preconditions, the objectives of the project are more likely to be attained.

Focus of future civil registration projects:

157. In the formulation of future civil registration projects, the objectives themselves may need some consideration. The possible reasons for the long-term objectives of current projects not being attained have been suggested earlier. From this experience, would it seem desirable to reconsider the focus of future projects in this area?

158. A civil registration system is almost universal. Therefore, it would seem that it is no longer necessary to support projects that seek to establish the total system, particularly since the establishment of an efficient system is essentially dependent on national interests and compulsions. The funding of a national system would, in any case, not be possible. However, as strongly urged earlier, UNFPA's interest and involvement in civil registration should not be diminished. It would, therefore, be useful to consider the possible future orientation of these projects.

159. At this point it would be necessary to note that both the Guidelines and the projects, in keeping with the mandate and interests of the UNFPA, emphasize the statistical utility of the civil registration system. This is a valid approach but it has had, in operational terms, an unfortunate result. Within the government concerned there has rarely been a recognition of the general utility of the system, as described earlier, for other development agencies, for administration and for the public. Even departments that should have been very concerned about the efficiency of the system such as those dealing with health, women's and child

welfare, family planning and the like have not been actively involved in measures for the improvement of the system.

160. Given these realities of civil registration systems, it would seem desirable to change the focus of future projects in this area. The components of a project that would need emphasis would no doubt be determined in more specific terms by the diagnostic study suggested earlier, but the focus should be:

- i) to establish within government an appreciation of the utility of the civil registration system, with particular reference to those ministries, departments or agencies concerned with health, family planning, women's welfare, infant and child mortality, education etc;
- ii) to develop methods and procedures for introduction of stipulations regarding the production of certificates of specified vital events, such as birth and death certificates, for various civil entitlements, in a progressive manner and with necessary safeguards;
- iii) to identify specific and priority activities to which the project may be restricted at a given point of time.

161. Such a focus would result in building up institutional strength as a priority in substitution of current attempts to improve systems which do not have such strength. This would also make the investment on the projects more cost effective. The adoption of such a focus for future projects is recommended.

Identification of specific priority components:

162. The diagnostic study would help in identifying those the specific components that a project could concentrate on and which are relevant for the attainment of the focus suggested. These could include (i) illustrating the utility of the system to policy makers and professionals in other official agencies, (ii) coordination issues, (iii) training (both international and in-country) of staff to augment skills, (iv) staff structures, (v) records maintenance, (vi) data processing, (vi) introduction of stipulations regarding production of certificates relating to vital events for official purpose, etc. If, for example, it is found that the structure of the forms is cumbersome, unnecessarily adds to printing and preservation costs and does not meet the requirements of computerized data processing, it could be considered whether the project can concentrate on the improvement of the reporting systems and data processing only as a first stage. Such specific projects would need consultancies and not long-term

experts, thus reducing costs²¹. It is recognized that in a particular case a comprehensive project in the traditional format that seeks to include all operations may be necessary but, with the experience gained so far, such projects should be the exception rather than the rule. It is recommended that, depending on the findings of the diagnostic study, the scope of a project should preferably be restricted to essential priority activities and which keep the focus in view.

163. The diagnostic study would also help in identifying components that should be considered in priority. For example, if there is little recognition or appreciation of the utility of the system in official agencies or within government, the establishment of such a recognition through demonstration of the value of the system could, by itself, be a project. The priority ordering of the components of a project could be made through the diagnostic study.

164. In this context it would be relevant to consider the linking, as in some countries, of the civil registration system to the systems of population registers and identity cards. Such administrative linkages can strengthen the civil registration system. The importance of inclusion in the population registers and the need to possess an identity card are clearly perceived by the public. If these administrative systems require the production of birth or death certificates, they may, in fact, help in increasing awareness of the registration system and be conducive to the improvement of the latter. It is recommended that if the linkage exists or is sought to be established, this should not operate as a negative point in the consideration of a project for funding. Funding could, of course, be limited to those activities that are solely within the civil registration objectives of the project.

Assignment of international experts:

165. The need for assignment of long-term international experts to civil registration projects would depend on the findings of the diagnostic study. International experts are expensive and, more to the point, the project almost invariably becomes "expert dependent". It tends to fade away after the departure of the expert since it may not have succeeded in being functionally integrated in the department concerned. Nevertheless, there may be projects which may require a long-term international expert because it is complex or because it seeks to establish a system from scratch. Such situations would be very rare. Therefore, depending on the circumstances that prevail, short-term consultancies for the specific activities or components of a project would seem a

²¹ Handbook of Vital Statistics Systems and Methods, Volume I: Legal, organizational and technical aspects, United Nations, New York, 1991, E.91.XVII.5, Chapter VI, specially Table 6.1

desirable alternative. Such missions, if of reasonable duration, would enable the expert to intervene and suggest improvements without diminishing the responsibility of the national implementing agency. Such missions may be more cost effective and succeed in establishing direct departmental responsibility for the success of the project. It is recommended that the assignment of international long term experts could be made only in exceptional cases, with the possibility of assignment of direct responsibility to the national implementing agency assisted by short term international experts being the preferred alternative. If national experts are available, it would be desirable to associate them with the project as fully as possible in place of international personnel.

Need for mechanisms for monitoring:

166. In many cases projects have followed each other without an evaluation of the preceding one. As mentioned earlier, the process of project formulation does not normally envisage a rigorous evaluation. It is recommended that, on its conclusion, a project should be evaluated before further funding of a new one is considered. In particular, the evaluation should assist in assessing whether the preconditions for a project exist and what should be the priority areas for further funding, keeping in view the broad focus suggested earlier.

167. Also, in most cases there has been no attempt to determine the status of the civil registration system after the completion of all project activity. It is, therefore, not known, except by way of general impressions, whether the project has been able to establish the necessary momentum which would result in the system becoming national and whether government has taken those steps which would have helped in this direction. It would seem desirable to establish a mechanism for post-project monitoring of the system which would provide a status report of the system in a country and help in determining whether any further encouragement would be desirable to achieve the ultimate objective of establishment of an efficient national civil registration system. Appropriate reporting forms could be developed for this purpose with a periodicity to coincide with the UNFPA missions for preparation of the Project Review and Strategy Development Reports. It is recommended that a suitable monitoring mechanism be developed for determining the status of the civil registration system in a country at periodic intervals after conclusion of the projects. What mechanisms could be established for this purpose would need further consideration to take into account aspects such as the possible role of the UNFPA Country Support Teams and the integration of the technical expertise of the UN Statistical Office into the monitoring system.

168. It could be argued that any assessment based on a system of monitoring should be followed by recommendations for action with record to the conclusions drawn. It is suggested that the purpose

of the monitoring is different. It should not be considered as necessarily a pre-project activity. It is meant to obtain information with regard to an activity that is considered important and in which the UN Statistical Office, the UNFPA and other international agencies such as the UNICEF and WHO have a common interest. The documentation of such information is itself a useful result and if it were to result in further project activity this would be a bonus.

Need for technical coordination:

169. It has been recommended that the UNFPA should continue to support projects in civil registration and vital statistics but with more rigorous conditions for their objectives and focus. It would be necessary to ensure that there is some uniformity in (i) the conduct of the diagnostic study, (ii) identification of the appropriate preconditions for project formulation and implementation, (iii) determination of the particular focus of a project, and (iv) identification of the specific components and activities proposed to be included in a project based on the diagnostic study. It would also be necessary to maintain reasonable parity among projects with regard to inputs such as international or national expertise and equipment and other assets. Similar approaches would be called for with regard to evaluation and monitoring. This would imply that the conduct of diagnostic studies and all other aspects referred to here, including monitoring and evaluation, should be subject to technical examination from the beginning. For this purpose, it is recommended that the UN Statistical Office should be fully involved since it would have the advantage of having a global approach, specially since it is also the repository of long experience in this field. Coordination would be essential between the Country Support Teams and the UN Statistical Office.

170. Recognizing the need for the equitable spread of available funds over numerous activities and, at the same time the need for ensuring that projects relating to civil registration are given due support, it is recommended that, while the UNFPA must continue to support these projects, it may wish to involve other donors in this activity. The continued demonstration of UNFPA's interest in projects in this area would encourage the involvement of multi- or bi-lateral funds.

Coordination of related projects to strengthen the civil registration system:

171. It has been repeatedly emphasized that the civil registration system in a country should not be considered in isolation and that its utility as a tool of management of development programmes of numerous other agencies must be recognized. Therefore, elements of the system should be built into the appropriate projects of these other agencies so that there is synergistic support to the civil

registration and vital statistics system. These elements would be largely informative and educational. Their inclusion would not entail any costs. Projects relating to women's welfare, immunization, family planning, social welfare benefits and the like could build in elements of information on the benefits of the civil registration system. Training programmes for medical personal could expose them to the utility of vital statistics and, therefore, the need to educate the public to register vital events while carrying out their functions. School programmes could also include elementary messages of similar nature to inculcate in the young the utility of registration. There would be innumerable such programmes and projects which, at no cost, could lend support to the civil registration system. All development agencies could be requested to introduce such elements in their projects. It is recommended that this possibility be kept in mind in the formulation of UNFPA projects in the areas referred to.

172. In this context, it would be desirable if such informative and educative elements that support and strengthen the civil registration system can be built into the appropriate projects or activities funded by other international agencies such as the WHO, UNICEF and UNIFEM. These organizations presumably have a direct interest in the establishment of reliable civil registration systems and share the anxiety of the UNFPA in developing such systems universally. The inclusion of the type of supportive components would not entail any costs. In other words, this would result in a programme approach to civil registration instead of the purely project approach as at present. It is recommended that the UNFPA explores how best this could be achieved.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

173. The main conclusions and recommendations are presented in this chapter. The relevant paragraphs have also been indicated for reference.

I. Case Studies:

Sierra Leone:

174. The project has had limited achievement. The legal framework was developed and training programmes were implemented. A model registration system had been demonstrated but has not been extended. A reliable, national civil registration system has not been established nor has the necessary momentum for its eventual establishment been created. (Paras 17 - 19).

Syria:

175. (i) The project is still under execution. The training components have been partially implemented. The establishment of mechanisms of coordination is one of the objectives. The two recent consultancy reports on operational issues would have to be followed up to examine how the suggestions made in these reports could be implemented.

(ii) It is recommended that the project be evaluated on its conclusion. (Paras 21, 27, 28).

Tanzania:

176. The training programmes and study tours were completed. The project has not been able to make any significant impact on the system. The experimental system has not been extended nation-wide. There was little attempt to coordinate activities with associated official agencies. The project underwent fundamental changes, such as modification of the forms more than once and field staff transfers, during implementation with a negative effect on performance. (Paras 35,36).

Nigeria:

177. (i) The objectives of the project have been achieved only partially. The organization has been built up, the uniform law drafted, and training programmes implemented. The necessary high level coordination between related agencies has not been established. The public enlightenment campaign has not yet been tested effectively. The extension of the model system to other areas has not been completed.

(ii) It is recommended that the project be evaluated before a further project is developed. (Paras 45,46).

Kenya:

178. The strong features of this project have been training, public enlightenment and the development of well-tested procedures. The project could be said to have been successfully implemented so far as its immediate objectives in the first phase were concerned but it cannot be said to have generated the momentum for adoption of the system nation-wide. (Paras 57 - 61).

Mayanmar:

179. The first project has had limited success. The training programmes and study tours were completed. But very little progress was made in extension of civil registration to the extent planned. The project was based on too optimistic a view of the capacity of the national implementing agency. (Paras 66-68)

180. The second project is still under implementation. Delays were caused due to circumstances extraneous to the project. A consultancy report is available which recommends modifications in the forms and procedures. The aspects covered by this consultancy report are important and early action would be desirable to examine and test them. The projects have not yet been able to generate the necessary momentum for establishment of a nation-wide civil registration system. (Paras 74 - 76).

Botswana:

181. (i) The project is still under implementation but is nearing completion. The structural changes in the national implementing agency and the mechanisms for coordination between relevant agencies which were elements in the project have not been achieved. There has been no internal analytical reporting on the suitability of the procedures, the forms used and other operational aspects.

(ii) It is recommended that the project be evaluated on its conclusion before a further project is sought to be developed. (Paras 86 - 88).

Yemen:

182. The project PDY/85/PO8 has had some success with the implementation of the training and study tour programmes and the completion of the investigative survey. However, the results of the survey do not appear to be reflected in necessary organizational improvements. It is doubtful if the long-term utility of the project has been established. (Paras 100 - 102).

183. The first project in Yemen YEM/81/PO2 succeeded in establishing the basic registration organization at higher levels such as the head office and Governorates. The rules and procedures for registration were also prepared. However, the level of registration continued to be poor due to lack of publicity and absence of a perception of benefit from the system by the public. (Paras 103 - 105).

184. The second project in Yemen YEM/88/PO1 achieved the objectives of training. The uniform law was drafted and improved forms and procedures have been recommended. However, the important component relating to testing out improved management procedures and practices was not implemented. The core objective of the improvement of the system was not attained. (Paras 114 - 116).

185. The third project in Yemen YEM/88/026 cannot be said to have achieved its main objectives of trying out the system recommended and the preparation of a feasibility report on computerization of data processing. (Paras 118-119).

186. The project YEM/92/PO2 being implemented in the Republic of Yemen after integration is still in progress.

187. (i) If the projects are considered together, though they have run over a fairly long period, no substantial progress appears to have been made in establishing the civil registration system or even in generating internal momentum which would further this objective.

(ii) It is recommended that an evaluation should be made of these projects before further project activities in this field are envisaged. (Para 126).

II. General Conclusions and Recommendations:

188. Civil registration projects have no doubt had some limited achievements but the long term objective of encouraging the establishment of a reliable civil registration system nation-wide within a reasonable period has not been achieved. Unless the momentum for the latter has been generated, it would be difficult to conclude that the projects have succeeded. (Para 128).

189. (i) The immediate objectives have, in most cases, been largely attained. These are mainly functional activities as in the work plan but their completion cannot be assured as indicative of the success of a project. Unless there has been an evaluation of the results of a project soon after its conclusion, the utility of the model system that has been developed in the project or that of the other recommendations that might flow from its implementation would not have been determined. (Para 129).

(ii) It is, therefore, recommended that every project should be evaluated before further project activities in this field are planned.

190. Training components have generally been fully implemented. This would have resulted in enhancement of technical skills and the establishment of a core of trainers. The full utilization of this potential would be dependent on the sustained attention that governments devote to the improvement of the civil registration system. (Para 130).

191. The awareness in government and among policy makers of the utility of the civil registration system has not been created through the projects. The national utility of the system has not been adequately demonstrated. (Para 131).

192. The projects have made useful contributions to overall improvements to the systems but they cannot be said to have had the impact hoped for in terms of generating the momentum for sustained action for ultimate establishment of reliable nation-wide systems. Their contribution to improvement of the systems can only be said to have been marginal. (Para 132 - 133).

193. (i) The rationale for support for UNFPA funding for these projects is not only the specification in its Guidelines but also the great utility of the civil registration system for providing essential inputs for population planning. The system has the unique feature of providing essential demographic data for small areas. Such data are useful for health planning and programmes relating to maternal and child care, immunization of infants and children, etc. The data from the system are also needed for assessing and monitoring demographic trends, to design and evaluate population policies and programmes, and to integrate population factors in all major socio-economic development programmes. In particular, the flow data provided by the system is useful for monitoring population changes at various area levels. For these, and other reasons indicated, the continued support by the UNFPA to this activity would be fully justified. (Paras 134 - 140).

(ii) It is strongly recommended that the UNFPA should continue to encourage and support projects relating to civil registration and vital statistics.

194. (i) The demonstration approach continue to be a useful mechanism for testing out innovations and new technologies. It is a mechanism to experiment on a manageable scale. (Paras 141 - 147).

(ii) It is recommended that the demonstration approach should be continued to be viewed as a valid method but its adoption should be dependent on the specific components and objectives of the project.

195. (i) Among the factors that influence the growth and strength of a civil registration system, the most important is the priority assigned to it by the government. National commitment is conditioned by official recognition of the utility of the system by numerous government agencies and by the pressure from the public for an efficient system because of stipulated requirements of certificates of vital events for various purposes. In the absence of a felt internal need or outside pressure through a perceived public benefit, the system does not, generally speaking, receive the support it deserves. (Paras 148 - 152).

(ii) It is recommended that national commitment should be assessed before project formulation and made a precondition for a project.

196. (i) It would be desirable to assess whether the preconditions exist which would give some firm assurance of the successful implementation of a project. The assessment and requirement of such preconditions would save the considerable time and effort now spent for establishing basic internal structures. (Paras 153 - 156)

(ii) It is recommended that desirable preconditions be established before a project is formulated or implemented and that the relevant preconditions be identified through a diagnostic study which could be made before project formulation is attempted.

197. (i) The focus of future civil registration projects may need to be defined. The focus would (i) to establish within government an appreciation of the utility of the civil registration system, with particular reference to those ministries, departments or agencies concerned with health, family planning, women's welfare, infant and child mortality, education etc, (ii) to develop methods and procedures for introduction of stipulations regarding the production of certificates of specified vital events, such as birth and death certificates, for various civil entitlements, in a progressive manner and with necessary safeguards, and (iii) to identify specific and priority activities to which the project may be restricted at a given point of time. Such a focus would result in building up institutional strength as a priority in substitution of current attempts to improve systems which do not have such strength. (Paras 157 - 161).

(ii) It is recommended that such a focus for future civil registration projects be adopted.

198. (i) The diagnostic study suggested earlier would identify those specific components that a project could concentrate on and also their priority. It would help in restricting the scope of a project to priority components. (Paras 162 - 163).

(ii) It is recommended that, depending on the findings of the diagnostic study, the scope of a project should preferably be restricted to priority activities and which keep the focus in view.

199. (i) Some administrative links between the civil registration system and other systems, such as population registers, could strengthen the former and assist in its early and nation-wide establishment. (Para 164).

(ii) It is recommended that if such links exist or are sought to be established, these should not be viewed as a negative feature while considering a project for funding. The funding could, of course, be limited to only those activities that relate to civil registration.

200. (i) The need for international long term experts would be determined by the diagnostic study which would also assess the availability of national expertise. The assignment of international experts could be restricted to projects where other arrangements are not possible. (Para 165).

(ii) It is recommended that the assignment of international long term experts could be made only in exceptional cases, with the possibility of assignment of direct responsibility to the national implementing agency assisted by short term international experts being the preferred alternative. If national experts are available, it would be desirable to associate them with the project as fully as possible in place of international personnel.

201. (i) In many cases projects have followed each other without a rigorous evaluation of the preceding one. Such an evaluation would be very useful to identify operational weaknesses and also to assess whether the preconditions suggested earlier exist. Other reasons for such an evaluation have been mentioned earlier. It would also be desirable to monitor periodically the status of civil registration systems in countries where such projects have been implemented. (Paras 166 - 168).

(ii) It is recommended that an evaluation be carried out as part of the monitoring process and that a suitable mechanism be developed for determining the status of the civil registration system in a country at periodic intervals after conclusion of the projects.

202. (i) It would be desirable to maintain some degree of uniformity and technical quality in the diagnostic studies and the conclusions drawn from them. In particular, the identification of priority components for a project would need technical appraisal with a uniform approach. This would mean that the conduct of diagnostic studies and all other aspects relating to these projects, including monitoring and evaluation, are subject to technical examination from the beginning. (Para 169).

(ii) It is recommended that the UN Statistical Office should be fully involved in this process since it would have the advantage of a global approach, specially since it is also the repository of long experience in this field. Coordination would be essential in this matter between the Country Support Teams and the UN Statistical Office.

203. (i) The continued demonstration of UNFPA's interest in projects in civil registration would encourage the involvement of multi- and bi- lateral donors. This would enhance funding for these projects since the need for equitable spread of UNFPA's available funds over numerous activities is recognized. (Para 170).

(ii) It is recommended that, while UNFPA may continue to support these projects, it may explore the possibility of involving other donors in this activity.

204. (i) It has been emphasized that the civil registration system in a country should not be considered in isolation. Elements that would lend support to the system could be built into many of the projects relating to other population issues such as maternal and child care, family planning, almost all health programmes, etc. Such elements could also be built into educational programmes. Such support would establish the civil registration system on a firm footing. The elements would largely be informative and educational and their inclusion would not entail any costs. (Para 171).

(ii) It is recommended that elements of the civil registration system should be built into the appropriate projects of health, educational and other relevant agencies so that there is synergistic support to this system. The possibility of doing so must be kept in mind in the formulation of UNFPA projects in the areas indicated.

205. (i) It would be desirable if educative elements that support and strengthen the civil registration system could be built into the appropriate projects or activities funded by other international agencies such as the WHO, UNICEF and UNIFEM. The inclusion of such supportive elements would not entail any costs to these organizations. (Para 172).

(ii) It is recommended that the UNFPA explores the possibility of the inclusion of elements relating to civil registration in appropriate projects or activities funded by other international organizations.

ANNEX I

Persons met

UNFPA:

1. Ms. Mehri Hekmati, Chief, International and NGO Programme Branch
2. Mr. Stephen Flaetgen, Programme Officer, Interregional
3. Mr. Stan Bernstein, Technical Adviser, Population Data, Policy and Research Branch, Technical and Evaluation Unit
4. Mr. Abdul Abu-Nuwar, Deputy Chief, Division for Arab States and Europe
5. Ms. Angelica Domato, Evaluation Officer, Technical and Evaluation Division
6. Ms. Teresa Edenholm, Programme Officer, East and South East Asia Branch, Asia and The Pacific Division
7. Mr. Oyebade Ajayi, Programme Officer, Africa Division
8. Ms. Francis Godin, Programme Officer, Africa Division
9. Ms. Diane Lee Langston, Programme Officer, Africa Division
10. Ms. Ruth Akumu, Programme Officer, Africa Division
11. Ms. Ana Angarita, Programme Officer, Latin America and Caribbean Division
Mr. George Nsiah, Programme Officer, Africa Division

Statistical Office:

1. Mr. William Seltzer, Director
2. Dr. Y.C. Yu, Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch
3. Dr. K. Gnanasekharan, Chief, Demographic Statistics Section
4. Ms. Violeta Gonzales-Diaz, Statistician, Demographic Statistics
5. Ms. Ieda Siqueira, Technical Adviser
6. Dr. Sam Suharto, Technical Adviser

7. Dr. Anis Maitra, International Adviser in Statistical Training and Demographic Statistics
8. Mr. Sirageldin Suliman, Technical Adviser
9. Mr. Giovanni Carissimo, Chief, Technical Cooperation Unit

United Nations Archives:

1. Ms. Marilla Guptil, Chief of Archives Unit
2. Mr. William Martinez, UN Archives.

ANNEX 2

CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS PROJECTS FUNDED BY UNFPA
 Currency US \$

<u>Country</u>	<u>Project Number</u>	<u>Title of Project</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Afghanistan	AFG 77 P01	Vital Registration	<u>272,048</u>
Burundi	BDI 78 P02	Civil Registration	<u>519,998</u>
Benin	BEN 89 P01	Improvement of Civil Regn	<u>77,262</u>
Botswana	BOT 83 P01 and BOT 88 P02 BOT 89 P02	Civil Registration Civil Registration	30,810 <u>482,120</u> <u>512,930</u>
Central African Republic	CAF 78 P01	Civil Registration	<u>133,247</u>
Cyprus	CYP 72 P03	Registration, Vital Statistics	<u>27,467</u>
Equatorial Guinea	EQG 90 P02	Civil Registration	<u>79,079</u>
Gabon	GAB 89 P01	Civil Registration	<u>129,294</u>
Ghana	GHA 72 P04	Registration System Births	<u>694,630</u>
Honduras	HON 72 P01 HON 78 P02	Vital Statistics Registration Assist Civil Regn/Vital Stat	48,210 5,000 <u>53,210</u>
Iraq	IRQ 72 P01	Collection of Vital Statistics	<u>117,005</u>
Jordan	JOR 72 P01 JOR 87 P03	Registration of Vital Statistics Support to Civil Status Dept	5,893 126,904 <u>132,797</u>
Kenya	KEN 79 P04 KEN 85 P01 KEN 89 P04	Vital Stat/Civil Registration Civil Registration Activities Civil Registration Workshop	696,678 126,028 32,921 <u>855,627</u>
Laos	LAO 87 P01	Improvement of Vital Regn	<u>119,081</u>
Lesotho	LES 74 P05	Registration of Births/deaths	<u>38,357</u>
Malaysia	MAL 79 P07	Strengthening National Regn Dept	<u>42,517</u>

Mauritania	MAU 88 P02	Civil Registration	<u>352,629</u>
Morocco	MOR 87 P01	Civil Registration	316,246
	MOR 88 P03	Civil Registration	10,344
	MOR 92 P03	Civil Regn/ Vital Statistics	8,000
			<u>334,590</u>
Myanmar	MYA 75 P02	Vital Statistics and Regn	218,774
	MYA 88 P05	Improvement of Vital Regn	119,633
			<u>338,407</u>
Nepal	NEP 74 P05	Civil & Vital registration	241,149
	NEP 80 P02	Vital Registration	67,525
			<u>308,674</u>
Niger	NER 80 P02	Civil Registration	303,916
	NER 88 P05	Civil Registration	147,204
			<u>451,120</u>
Nicaragua	NIC 71 P01	Civil Registration, Statistics	<u>60,816</u>
Nigeria	NIR 85 P02	Civil Registration/ Vital Stat	447,436
	NIR 85 P03	Civil Registration	282,077
			<u>729,513</u>
Panama	PAN 78 P03	Civil Regn and Vital Statistics	<u>197,814</u>
Paraguay	PAR 85 P02	Civil Registration	<u>401,471</u>
People's Democratic Republic of Yemen	PDY 74 P01	Civil Registration	694,650
	PDY 85 P08	Strengthening of Civil Regn	332,997
			<u>1,027,647</u>
Peru	PER 73 P04	Civil Regn / Vital Stat System	2,555
	PER 84 P03	Civil Registration	35,183
			<u>37,738</u>
Prigo	PRC 76 P03	Civil Registration	526,354
	PRC 88 P02	Civil Registration	34,284
			<u>620,638</u>
Saudi Arabia	SAU 72 P02	Improvement of Civil Regn	<u>96,590</u>
Senegal	SEN 84 P02	Civil Registration System	<u>3,727</u>
Sierra Leone	SIL 71 P02	Vital Statistics Registration	34
	SIL 79 P03	Strengthening of Civil Regn System	732,434
			<u>732,468</u>
Somalia	SOM 80 P03	Civil Regn and vital Statistics	<u>42</u>

Sao Tome and Principe	STP 90 P03	Vital Statistics	<u>59,867</u>
Sudan	SUD 86 P04	Civil Registration	<u>355,461</u>
Swaziland	SWA 72 P01	Improving Vital Statistics	139,914
	SWA 78 P03	Civil Registration	241,278
			<u>381,192</u>
Syria	SYR 76 P06	Civil Registration	49,463
	SYR 80 P01	Civil Registration	10,820
	SYR 81 P06	Reform of Civil/Vital Statistics	38,490
			<u>98,773</u>
Tunisia	TUN 71 P02	Vital Registration System	<u>175</u>
Uganda	UGA 76 P02	Vital Stat/ Civil Registration	<u>24,442</u>
Tanzania	TAN 79 P05	Civil Registration system	<u>399,364</u>
Uruguay	URU 75 P01	Civil Regn/ Vital Statistics	<u>208,364</u>
Yemen	YEM 76 P01	Civil Registration	120,946
	YEM 81 P02	Civil Regn / Vital Statistics	520,265
	YEM 88 P01	Civil Regn and Vital Statistics	128,984
	YEM 82 P02	Vital Statistics in Pilot Areas	187,920
			<u>958,115</u>
Yaire	YAI 72 P01	Civil Registration System	<u>44,113</u>
TOTAL C.R./V.S. PROJECTS FUNDED			<u>1,492,230</u>
International	INT 80 P12	International Programmes for Vital Statistics and Civil Registration	68,451
	INT 82 P91	Improvement of Vital Statistics & Civil Registration Systems	265,000
			<u>333,431</u>
Regional	RAS 76 P24	Regional Asia	50,589
	RLA 71 P09	Regional Americas	17,065
	RLA 78 P14	Regional Americas	234,485
			<u>312,139</u>
TOTAL:			
Country Projects	11,492,230		
International	333,431		
Regional	312,139		
Total	12,137,800		

The earliest CR/VS Project was . 1972. Over the span o. about 20 years the average annual funding of such projects by the UNFPA has been of the order of \$ 606,890. If country projects alone are considered, the average annual funding has been of the order of \$ 574,610 spread over many countries. In real terms, if the investment in previous years is adjusted for inflation, the scale of investment would be higher.

Source: UNFPA, New York.

ANNEX 3

Note: This annex does not contain the full text of the guidelines. Only portions relevant to civil registration and vital statistics have been presented.

UNFPA HANDBOOK OF
POLICY GUIDELINES

BASIC DATA COLLECTION
PAGE I-1

GUIDELINES FOR UNFPA SUPPORT TO BASIC DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

I.1 Introduction

The availability of statistical data generally influences the quality of development planning and population data are particularly indispensable for effective social and economic programming. During the last two decades, both the need for, and scope of, population data have greatly expanded in the developing countries as a result of their efforts to formulate and implement population policies and to integrate population factors into development planning.

Recognizing these expanding roles, the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA) urged the developing countries to establish or strengthen national capacities to collect, tabulate, analyze, publish and disseminate population data. In accordance with these recommendations, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has supported a large number of data collection activities in developing countries.

The conventional sources of population data include censuses, vital statistics registration systems, population registers, population sample surveys and other official statistics. The complementary character of these data make possible the descriptive analyses of population dynamics, analytical investigations of fertility, mortality and migration, the making of population estimates and projections, and the monitoring and assessment of population programme performance.

I.2 UNFPA Strategy and Guidelines

The utilization and publication of findings resulting from basic data collection activities are viewed as crucial by UNFPA. The Fund considers national commitment to these activities as a requirement for the provision of its assistance to this sector. The major aim of UNFPA assistance to countries which seek to establish or improve their basic data collection activities is to develop a continuing national capacity to collect, analyze, use and publish basic population data. The Fund attaches great importance to the attainment of self-reliance by developing countries and to

the increased participation of women in this sector. The Fund's strategy includes:

- (a) human resources development through training programmes and the transfer of modern technology and technical skills;
- (b) institution building at the national level;
- (c) Strengthening of managerial and administrative capacity; and
- (d) operational research and pilot projects to explore innovative approaches.

The Fund has been providing substantial support for basic data collection activities since it became operational in 1969, and, because of the continued need, it will continue its support to this sector albeit with some modifications. In particular, the Fund may encourage, to the extent its resources and mandate will permit, innovative approaches to the collection and analysis of data that are particularly relevant for formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population policies and programmes, as well as for the incorporation of population data into development planning.

1. Population Census
2. Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

The United Nations defines vital records as "those relating to live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimation, recognitions, annulments and separations". In short, all the events which have to do with an individual's entrance into or departure from life, together with the changes in his or her civil status which may occur during his or her lifetime.

Vital records have a number of uses for the individual, as well as statistical uses in population studies and development planning. In most developing countries, their quality in terms of coverage and completeness is quite inadequate. While UNFPA recognizes the importance of an efficient national system for collecting vital statistics, it is also aware of the difficulties in establishing such a comprehensive system given the current socio-economic realities in the developing countries.

It should be noted that there are a number of methods of obtaining data on levels and trends in vital rates, and changes therein. However, the registration method is a preferred method since it provides information on changes in the individual's vital and civil status as they occur. Recognizing this, the Fund will continue its limited support to improve registration of vital events as well as to obtain vital rates from other sources such as

Sample Registration Schemes, Model Registration Schemes, Vital Statistics Enumeration Surveys and Analytical Methods.

The United Nations defines the registration method of collecting vital statistics as the "continuous, permanent and compulsory recording of the occurrence and the characteristics of vital events". The various steps that are crucial for the successful operation of a vital registration system include:

- (a) appropriate registration laws and regulations;
- (b) Adequate administrative organization and mechanics of co-ordination;
- (c) proper form, content, and definition of registration records;
- (d) functional establishment of the registration process; and
- (e) statistical machinery to compile, tabulate, analyze and publish vital statistics.

While the Fund recognizes the importance of all these steps in the establishment of a sound vital registration system, it is not possible for UNFPA, in view of its limited resources, to finance the total cost of establishing or strengthening nation-wide vital registration systems. Furthermore, the Fund considers it essential that those countries desiring UNFPA assistance have already passed a civil registration law or its equivalent and have established a national civil registration office. Also, a demonstrable national commitment to continue activities at the conclusion of the project is of utmost importance. The UNFPA funding in this sector will generally be limited to:

- (a) Limited technical assistance may be provided to help develop legislative measures in support of civil registration laws and for establishing the needed minimum infrastructure;
- (b) Assistance may be provided for starting or strengthening of civil registration projects in pilot areas. However, such assistance will normally be limited to a duration of two or three years. Expansion of the scheme to a nation-wide system is the responsibility of the country concerned;
- (c) Assistance may also be given to pilot projects employing other methods of collecting vital statistics such as, the Sample Registration Schemes, Model Registration Schemes, Vital Enumeration Surveys, Dual Record Systems and the like. As with pilot civil registration projects, the Fund's support here will also be limited in duration and confined to pilot areas only.

- (d) Training programmes covering aspects of registration, collection analysis, assessment and publication of vital events may be supported. Assistance may also be provided for the preparation and publication of technical documents;
- (e) Where vital registration is considered inadequate, evaluative studies to determine the accuracy, completeness and coverage of vital statistics may be financed;
- (f) Communication activities to help increase national awareness, community commitment and individual participation in registration of vital events may be supported; and
- (g) UNFPA may continue to support activities at the regional, interregional and global levels in support of civil registration and vital statistics, especially for technical backstopping, preparation of technical documentation and training manuals.

3. Sample Surveys

I.3 Selected Operational Inputs

1. Advisory Services

UNFPA will continue to support the provision of advisory services for basic data collection activities. It supports short-term consultants, experts, regional and interregional advisers. Depending upon national capacity, the priority country status and the availability of related advisory services in the country in question, the Fund will determine the number, duration and type of technical advisory inputs that it will support. In general, the Fund encourages the utilization of the services of sub-regional, regional and interregional advisers to backstop country projects and limits the provisions for posts of technical advisers to individual projects. It is important to emphasize here that it is incumbent on the Government to ensure that qualified nationals are made available to work with international experts.

A wide variety of technical areas in basic data collection projects may require technical advice, but it is not possible for UNFPA to provide international experts/advisers/consultants for every one of them. To the maximum extent possible, the existing technical advisory capacities of the United Nations system will be utilized while, at the same time, fostering TCDC approaches more frequently and wherever possible.

Although individually quite distinct, the census, vital statistics registration and sample surveys are somewhat similar in their needs for technical advice. They require certain types of advice for a longer duration and certain other types for a shorter

period of time. The Fund may support the provision of technical advice in the following substantive areas:

- Census methods and organization;
- population statistics;
- vital statistics;
- survey methods and organization;
- demography and population analysis;
- data processing and systems analysis;
- sampling;
- cartography; and
- communication.

2. National Personnel

As a general principle, all national personnel costs are to be borne by the government. However, the Fund may support such cost in regard to those countries on UNFPA's list of priority countries and the United Nations list of least developed countries; but in all other cases, only under exceptional circumstances, and only with documented justifications.

In principle, the cost of field enumeration must be met by the government and UNFPA may consider supporting this item only under very exceptional circumstances.

Furthermore, the Fund may provide for national personnel costs for only those activities that are of temporary nature, including items such as remuneration, travel, per diem and extra hours of work. It should be emphasized that support to all such items should be at standard national levels.

It should be noted that UNFPA's provision for national personnel costs be agreed upon, on a case-by-case basis, after a thorough internal review by the Fund prior to the project formulation.

3. Training

UNFPA may provide support for training, at the appropriate level (undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate), of different types of personnel working in basic data collection activities. Support could be given for short-term, long-term, formal, informal and in-service training, as well as fellowships, study tours, workshops and seminars, as appropriate.

The Fund places a strong emphasis on training courses conducted at the local level, which are cost-effective and nationally more relevant. Also, the provision for long-term overseas fellowship should be well-justified and have the assurance that the trained persons will be utilized in relevant fields after their return from training. In all training activities, special attention would be given to the creation of opportunities for women, through special actions required to increase their participation at the training provided, both in country and fellowships abroad. The various substantive fields for which UNFPA may provide funding for training include:

- census organization and management;
- vital registration;
- sampling techniques;
- social survey methods;
- population cartography;
- statistical demography or population statistics;
- general demography;
- socio-economic analysis;
- data processing and systems analysis; and
- statistical indicators on the situation of women.

4. Equipment and Supplies

UNFPA may continue its support for the provision of equipment and supplies, particularly those requiring foreign exchange, for basic data collection activities. However, such assistance will be determined only after a thorough examination of the use made and current status of equipment available in the country, especially that already provided by UNFPA. Assistance may be provided for non-expendable equipment as follows:

Data processing. The Fund may finance the purchase of cost effective computers and related data-processing equipment, including appropriate software relevant to the analysis of population data. In situations where rental of equipment is a worthwhile alternative, UNFPA may support the rental charges. In general, UNFPA will not support the purchase of large computers. In the event that a country is interested in obtaining a main-frame computer, UNFPA may consider financing the amount equivalent to the rental charges as its contribution towards the purchase of such equipment.

Audio Visual. UNFPA may provide limited support for audio-visual equipment intended for use in communication and training activities.

Transport. In the future, UNFPA may provide limited support for transport equipment and a large-scale provision of vehicles will not be supported in projects on data collection activities. The Fund may provide vehicles only in connection with activities to be undertaken on a long-term basis and not on a short-term basis.

Office equipment. Funding may be provided for office equipment, cartographic materials and printing machine, including paper; and

Miscellaneous. In addition to the above-mentioned items, UNFPA may provide for the initial stock of spare parts and limited support to operation and maintenance of the equipment it has supplied.

5. Publication Costs

While the publication and distribution costs of data and information generated through a census, vital registration systems and sample surveys are generally to be borne by the government, UNFPA may consider supporting these items in countries where local circumstances warrant such provisions. The Fund may also support the storage of data in machine-retrievable forms. UNFPA may provide for translation costs and for dissemination of findings.

6. Construction

UNFPA will not normally support construction or rental costs of buildings necessary for the conduct of basic data collection activities. Similarly, in no case will the cost of purchase of land for construction purposes be met by UNFPA.