



Challenges for the future: Implementation of international standards for civil registration and vital statistics

Srdjan Mrkić, UN Statistics Division



International standards

- ❑ UN Statistical Commission endorsed the *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, in 2014
- ❑ Brief walk through the history of UN guidelines

The original version in 1953

- ❑ vital statistics system was defined as including the legal registration, statistical recording and reporting of the occurrence, and collection, compilation, analysis, presentation and distribution of statistics pertaining to vital events, which in turn include live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimating, recognitions, annulments and legal separations
- ❑ essentially civil registration was defined as a part of vital statistics system



International standards

The first revision - 1973

- ❑ vital statistics system, irrespective of how it is organized, is defined as the total process of (a) collecting by registration, enumeration or indirect estimation, of information on the frequency of occurrence of certain vital events, as well as characteristics of events themselves and of the person(s) concerned, and (b) compiling, analysing, evaluating, presenting and disseminating these data in statistical form
- ❑ introducing enumeration and indirect estimation – recognizing the reality of the lack of civil registration in many countries

The second revision - 2001

- ❑ vital statistics system as the total process of (a) collecting information by civil registration or enumeration on the frequency of occurrence of specified and defined vital events, as well as relevant characteristics of the event themselves and of the persons or persons concerned, and (b) compiling, processing, analysing, evaluating, presenting and disseminating these data in statistical form
- ❑ omits indirect estimation – as *ad hoc* and temporary methods



International standards

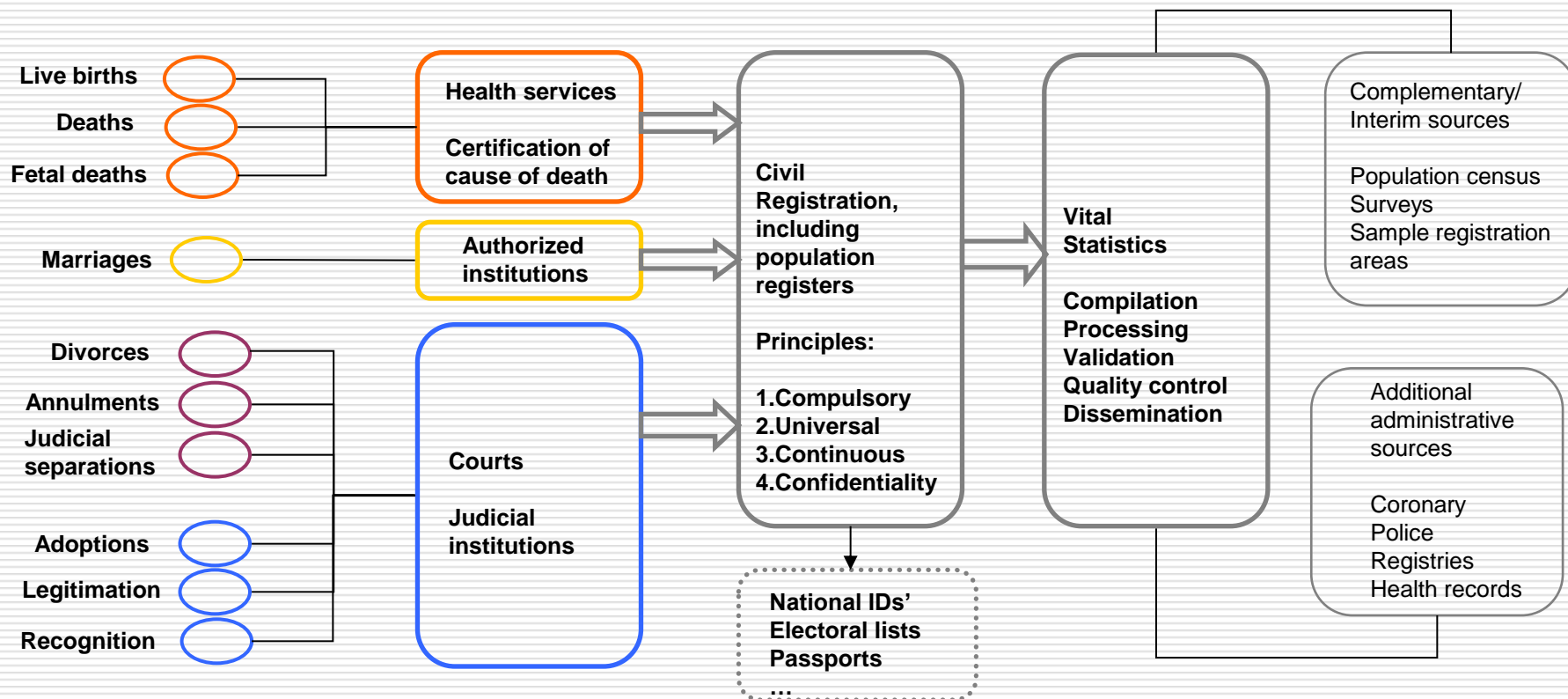
The current revision – definition of the vital statistics system

- A system – set of interacting or independent components forming an integrated wholesome
 - Legal registration
 - Statistical reporting
 - Collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics pertaining to vital events



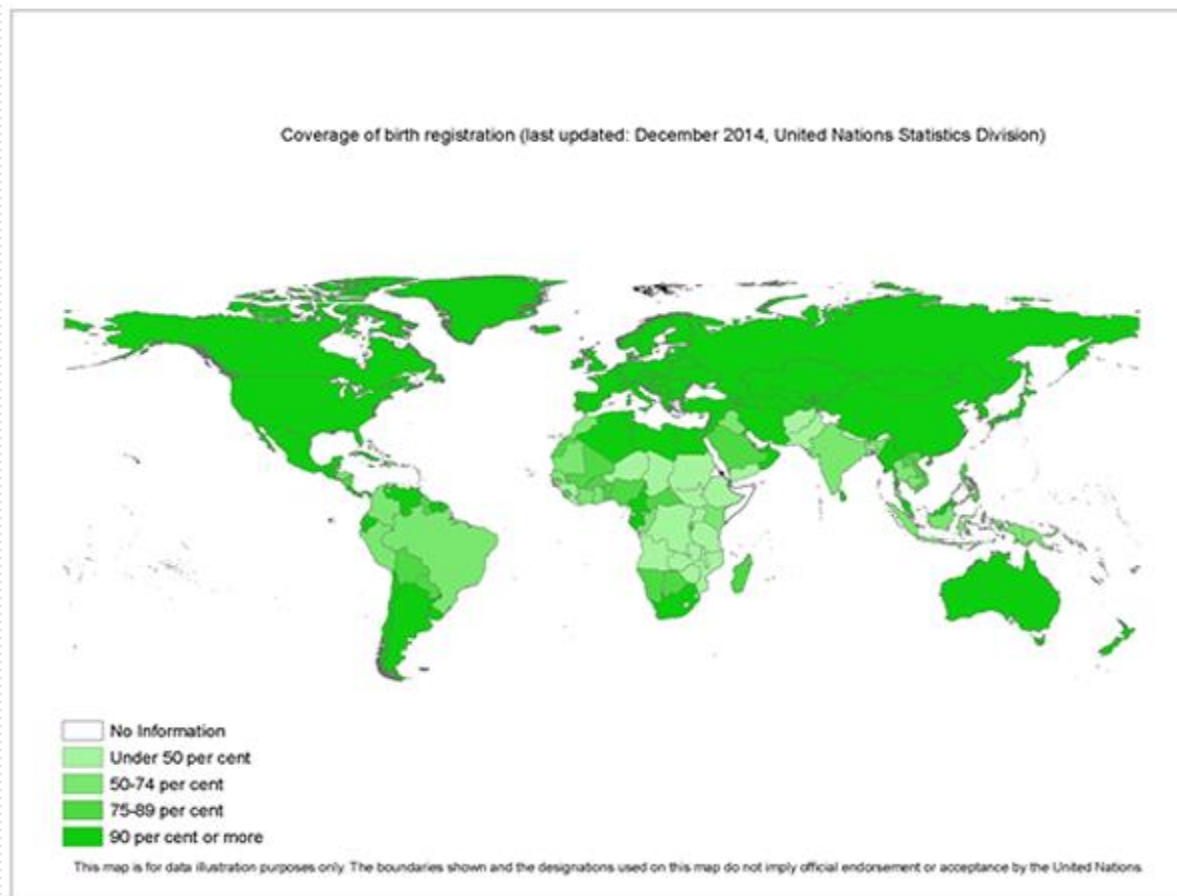
International standards

Vital Statistics System





Challenge #1: Civil registration coverage



As presented, the coverage of birth registration (90% and over) is implemented in around half of the countries in the world.



Coverage of death registration (last updated: December 2014, United Nations Statistics Division)



- No Information
- Under 50 per cent
- 50-74 per cent
- 75-89 per cent
- 90 per cent or more

This map is for data illustration purposes only. The boundaries shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

When it comes to the coverage of death registration (90% and over) the percentage of countries is even lower.



Challenge #2: Broken or never established link

- Functioning civil registration – no vital statistics
 - In a number of countries link between civil registration and vital statistics was never established
 - Hukou system in China – a 1% Sample Demographic Survey every five years
 - Tabien Baan in Thailand – Ministry of Health produces vital statistics from hospitals' and clinics' reporting
 - Kartu Keluarga in Indonesia - vital statistics rates produced from censuses and surveys
 - Automated civil registration system in Namibia - vital statistics rates produced from censuses and surveys



Challenge #3: Insufficient national statistical capacity

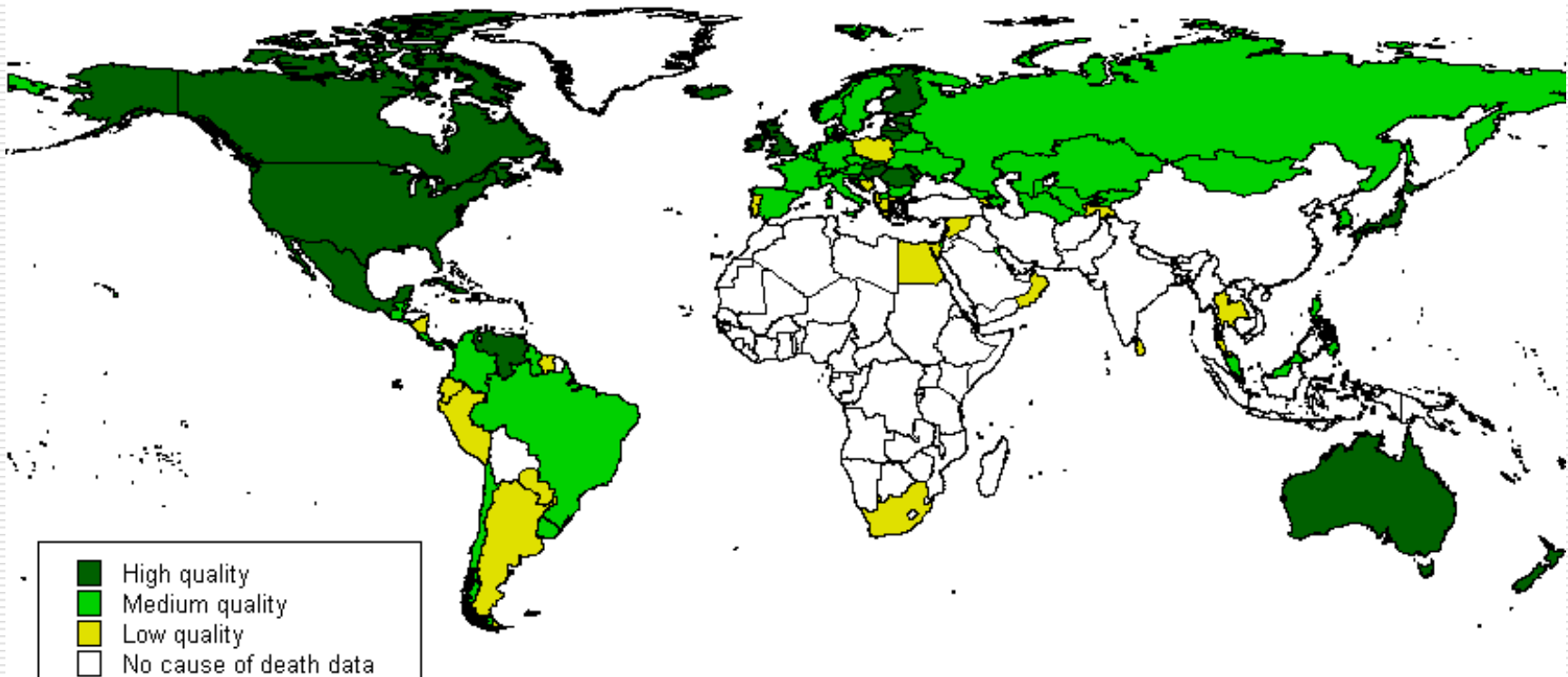
- Civil registration system is functioning, forms are submitted to statistics, but capacity is lacking for processing and producing regular, annual vital statistics, still relying on censuses and surveys

- Statistical capacity not at the level necessary for regular processing
 - In Botswana, civil registration office is producing annual vital statistics
 - In Malawi, forms delivered to the statistical office, remain unprocessed



Challenge #4: Certification and processing causes of death

Quality of cause of death data





Challenge #5: Ensuring production of vital statistics

- At the moment, countries across the globe are investing substantial resources in building identity card systems
 - Computerization of civil registration
 - Incorporating civil registration directly into identity card systems
 - Incorporating biometrics – iris scanning, fingerprints
 - Strong mandate in Sustainable Agenda Goals:
 -  Goal 16, target 9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
 - In the process, links with official statistics neglected, awareness of international standards and requirements, especially in terms of vital statistics topics, not always present and often non-existent
 - Most serious challenge – developing, setting-up and maintaining the civil registration and vital statistics system as per international recommendations
-



Vital Statistics System

