

# Civil Registration and Vital Statistics: Emerging Models and Work in Progress

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## Outline

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- New era for CRVS systems development in Africa
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## Why the CRVS Systems in Africa lagged behind ?

Civil registration system of various forms have been in place since the colonial period, but unfortunately progress has been dismal.

### **Before independence**

- **Colonial heritage:** registration & identification was used for discrimination of indigenous people - resulting in denial of right for movement, social exclusion and injustice;

### **After independence** – situation is characterized with

- Short shelf-life projects - CRVS systems were largely dominated by isolated project-based & ad hoc exercises and biased towards vital statistics;
- No national CRVS improvement plans - initiatives were mainly reactive rather than guided by national strategic plans;
- Lack of coordination and collaboration between key national stakeholders;
- Inadequate awareness about importance of CRVS systems, lack of technical knowledge and capacity for effective CRVS systems.
- Frequent emergencies related to conflicts and economic downturn.



## New era for CRVS systems development in Africa

**Turnaround!!!** - The last 7 years has witnessed encouraging initiatives & supportive CRVS systems

### The major initiatives include:

- **Political will** - Establishment of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration in August 2010 - commitment at national and regional levels
- **Collaboration** - Pan African organization (ECA, AUC and AfDB) has helped bring the desired improvement of CRVS systems in Africa;
- **Partners** – formation of the Africa CRVS Core Group of partners provide technical & financial supports for capacity building, including coordination of initiatives;
- **Coordination mechanism** – African Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) - regional programmatic framework that coordinates and guides CRVS systems improvement in the continent

# Important *levers* of change

Coordinated efforts through the APAI-CRVS and the Regional Core Group have brought a paradigm shift from fragmented and ad hoc activities to more coordinated and integrated CRVS improvement initiatives;

- **APAI-CRVS guiding principles** (taking into account country contexts) include:
  - Promoting *country ownership and leadership*;
  - Promoting *systematic and coordinated approaches* at the regional and country level;
  - Promoting *phased, holistic and integrated approaches*;
  - *Strengthening and building capacities* of national and regional CRVS institutions;
  - Promoting *partnership at country and regional levels*; and
  - Promoting *innovation, research and knowledge sharing*.

## Levers of change (Cont'd)

- **Capacity building initiatives for member States:** APAI-CRVS Secretariat, in collaboration with the Africa Core Group, has
  - developed several *guidelines and manuals* for use by countries;
  - *trained* hundreds of professionals in CR, VS and causes-of death data collection and analysis;
  - organized several *study tours and peer-to-peer experience exchange* for policy makers;
- **Country assessments and development of strategic plans**
  - As of end of 2017, over 30 countries have conducted assessments of their CRVS systems, and 14 countries have at least initiated the process of conducting a *comprehensive assessment*.
  - Twenty-five countries developed strategic improvement plans and a few initiated their implementation.

# Levers of change (Cont'd)

- **Regional CRVS monitoring mechanism:** a *web-based regional monitoring platform* was developed by the APAI-CRVS Secretariat in 2016 hosted at ECA and rolled out in early 2017;
  - By end of 2017, the results-based online monitoring and evaluation systems was completed by **39 African countries**;
- **Sustained political commitment at the country level** with governments taking leadership and ownership in strengthening their respective CRVS systems.
  - In 2016, African Member States declared **2017-2026** as the **Decade for repositioning of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa**.
- **Strategic Plan** - APAI-CRVS Secretariat, in collaboration the regional core group, has developed **a five-year (2017-2021) regional strategic plan** to guide CRVS improvement initiatives in the region.

# Nouakchott Declaration

The 4th Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration was held in Nouakchott from 7 to 8 December 2017.

- Theme of the Conference was *“Accelerating a coordinated improvement of civil registration and vital statistics for implementation and monitoring of the development agenda in Africa: Review of progress and the way forward.”*
- The Ministers put forward a set of recommendations, known as Nouakchott Declaration, which provides policy directions to APAI-CRVS in 2018 and 2019;
- The Declaration was endorsed by the Executive Council of African Heads of State in January 2018.



## Key recommendations of the Nouakchott Declaration

APAI-CRVS Secretariat, Pan-African Institutions and development partners support member states to:

- strengthen the *use of CRVS* for harnessing developmental potentials in the framework of the Regional Agenda 2063 and the Global SDGs 2030, paying particular attention to the demographic dividend and population movement;
- *improve mortality and causes of death statistics* through linkages between the health sector and CRVS systems and collaboration between MoH and Ministries responsible for CRVS;
- implement the *APAI-CRVS systems strategic plan for the period 2017-2021* with appropriate support from African Union member States and partners;
- establish a *Committee of African Registrars General* through the appropriate of the African Union STCs, in accordance with existing Rules & Regulations;

## Recommendations ... (Cont'd)

- improve the *staffing of the APAI-CRVS secretariat* in order to enhance its technical capacity;
- enhance *research and development* efforts, which foster methodologies that improve the processes pertaining to CRVS among African Union member States;
- carry-out *resource mobilization efforts* to improve CRVS systems;
- put in place appropriate *legal frameworks* to promote civil registration and vital statistics systems through the involvement of all stakeholders;
- include *refugees, internally displaced persons and persons at risk of statelessness in CRVS systems* and factor them into improvement strategies and scaling-up plans; and
- develop shared ICT assets in support of effective CRVS systems for the continent, which are built to common standards and are interoperable with other governmental systems, such as health and identity management.

## But there are challenges!!

Despite the remarkable progress made in the region, *coverage and completeness of civil registration remain very low.*

- The results of the recent regional monitoring show that:
  - Birth registration completeness have remained low (56% in 2015), while death registration have stagnated below 40% from 2012 to 2015;
  - Recording of cause of death information is particularly challenging, while marriage and divorce registrations are unacceptably low;
  - Nearly 13% of the countries have no government budget for CR operations;
  - About half of the countries do not have adequate legislation for producing vital statistics, only few countries produce annual VS from their CR system;
  - The use of ICT is minimal or non-existent, and where it exists, it is not integrated with the health management information system and the national ID management system.

# Way forward

- **Coordinate the implementation of the Nouakchott Declaration:** coordinate and follow-up countries, regional CRVS core group efforts towards the implementation of Resolutions by the 4<sup>th</sup> conference of Ministers.
- **Resource mobilization:** the Pan-African Institutions to carry-out mobilize resources for effective implementation of the APAI-CRVS five-year strategic plan.
- **Monitoring & evaluation mechanism:** Strengthening the online monitoring platform & supporting countries to establish national M&E systems to regularly monitor coverage, completeness & quality of CR at country level.
- **Address supply and demand related barriers on CRVS improvement:** carry-out research and development efforts to identify and address major obstacles to improve CR coverage and completeness of vital events and determining and recording cause of deaths.

## Way Forward .... (Cont'd)

- **Produce quality and timely national vital statistics report:** providing continued technical supports for countries on how to compile, analyze produce, and disseminate annual VS for monitoring national development plans.
- **Support countries to improve the use of ICT for CRVS systems:** encourage countries investment on innovative, affordable and sustainable IT support for efficient CRVS systems and data interoperability, safe data handling, producing and dissemination accurate and timely vital statistics.
- **Committee of African Registrar Generals:** fast-track the establishment of the Committee to bridge the gap in intergovernmental coordination, oversight and reporting mechanism that would work continuously with APAI-CRVS Secretariat during the two-year inter-ministerial conference period.

*Thank you*



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