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**Conference of African Ministers  
Responsible for Civil Registration**  
Sixth session  
Expert segment

Addis Ababa, 24–28 October 2022

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda for the expert segment\*\*

**Statutory issues: report on progress in the implementation of ministerial resolutions of the fifth session of the Conference**

## **Progress made in the implementation of the recommendations made at the fifth session of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration**

### **I. Introduction**

1. Since the first session of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, held in Addis Ababa in 2010, African countries have embarked on a remarkable journey to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems. The Conference was established as a statutory organ of the African Union Commission to report to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union every two years on the progress made in civil registration. The Conference provides policy guidance to the secretariat of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems. Five sessions of the Conference have been held so far, in 2010, 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2019. The sixth session is scheduled for October 2022. All sessions include an expert segment during which discussions are held around technical aspects, the conclusions of which are presented at the ministerial segment for adoption and approval by the Member States.

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2. The secretariat of the Africa Programme, which is responsible for the day-to-day coordination of technical assistance provided to countries in implementing the recommendations of the Conference, is hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The secretariat is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the commitments made at each session of the Conference and reporting on the status of implementation at future sessions of the Conference.

3. The present report contains an examination of the progress made over the past three years in the implementation of the recommendations made at the fifth session of the Conference (expert segment), held in Lusaka in 2019. Unlike previous reports, which were focused solely on inputs from the civil registration and vital statistics regional core group, the present report includes an analytical summary of information gathered from both countries and the core group on the implementation of the recommendations. The report thus also covers the reflections of government officials on the status of implementation of the recommendations. The information was collected by ECA in 2021 from 25 African countries through a self-administered questionnaire. Where country officials did not respond to the questionnaire, information was drawn from other secondary sources, including presentations made by country representatives at various webinars and recently published country reports. The present report also covers the reflections of development partners that are members of the core group on their efforts to support countries in the implementation of the recommendations.

4. During the period covered in the present report, the operations of civil registration systems were severely affected by the current global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.<sup>1</sup> This had a negative impact on the effective implementation of the recommendations within the agreed upon time frame. In fact, owing to the pandemic, the sixth session was not held in 2021 as had been planned. The resilience of civil registration and vital statistics systems during such an emergency depends on the ability of the system to adapt to changing circumstances, on the type of system (whether it is paper based, online or offline), on existing capacity and abilities and on the requirements set forth in the regulations that legitimize civil registration processes.

5. However, since the first imported cases of COVID-19 were detected in March 2020, most countries have done much to contain the spread of the virus. The pandemic has reaffirmed the need for robust, interoperable systems that can continue to function in an emergency. Effective civil registration and vital statistics systems would also help countries to correctly detect pandemic mortality, allowing them to take the necessary measures in response.

## **II. Feedback from countries on the status of implementation of the recommendations**

6. Forty-one recommendations, in which Member States and partners were called upon to further improve civil registration and vital statistics systems, were proposed at the expert segment of the fifth session of the Conference. In developing the data collection tool that was sent to countries, it was deemed necessary to group together recommendations that were identical, bringing the total number of recommendations to 39. All recommendations are

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<sup>1</sup> See Pacific Community, “Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations of national civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems”, 2021.

structured around six themes<sup>2</sup> that need to be treated as a priority by countries in order to meet their international commitments, such as target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Any initiative or effort undertaken by a country should lead to an improvement in the rate of completeness of civil registration. Therefore, before examining the progress made by countries in implementing the recommendations, it is important to first examine national rates of completeness on the continent, using live births and deaths as key vital events that represent entry and exit points in the human life cycle, respectively (see table 1).

Table 1

**Coverage of birth and death registration by national civil registration departments**

Country	Coverage of birth registration (percentage)	Coverage of death registration (percentage)	Year	Source indicated in the questionnaire
Algeria				
Angola	80	50	2021	Ministry of Justice
Benin	90	16	2020	National Bureau of Statistics
Botswana	100	80	2021	Annual report on vital statistics
Burkina Faso	82	..	2019	National population census
Burundi	20–30	..	2021	Assessment of the Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi
Cabo Verde				
Cameroon	69	10	2018	Report of the national civil registration office
Central African Republic	51	5–10	2019	National statistical office
Chad	26	..	2019	Demographic and health survey and multiple indicator cluster survey
Comoros				
Congo	95	80	2021	Report on civil registration and vital statistics
Côte d'Ivoire	72	..	2017	Report on civil registration and vital statistics
Democratic Republic of the Congo	50	..	2018	Multiple indicator cluster survey
Djibouti	50	50	2020	National institute of statistics
Egypt				
Equatorial Guinea	60	20	2021	Ministry of Justice

<sup>2</sup> The themes are: improving legislative and regulatory frameworks; using technology and innovative approaches; strengthening national coordination mechanisms; strengthening political commitment and resources for civil registration and vital statistics; improving systems through evaluations and the development of national civil registration and vital statistics plans; and undertaking capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation of the regional initiative and national programmes.

Eritrea	75	35	2021	Report on civil registration and vital statistics
Eswatini	31	74	2021	Annual report on civil registration and vital statistics
Ethiopia	28	17	2021	Report on civil registration and vital statistics
Gabon				
Gambia	59	..	2020	Demographic and health survey
Ghana	70	17	2021	Estimates of the birth and death registry
Guinea	62	1	2018	National institute of statistics
Guinea-Bissau	46	..	2019	Multiple indicator cluster survey
Kenya	86	55	2021	Report on vital statistics
Lesotho	16	38	2018	Comprehensive assessment report on civil registration and vital statistics
Liberia	25	5	2018	Demographic and health survey
Libya				
Madagascar	83	..	2018	
Malawi	56	23	2021	Annual report on civil registration and vital statistics
Mali	77	7	2020	Report on civil registration and vital statistics
Mauritania				
Mauritius	100	100	2021	Report on civil registration and vital statistics
Morocco	97	78	2021	Report of the Ministry of the Interior
Mozambique	55	12	2014	Ministry of Justice
Namibia	80	76	2017	Vital statistics report of Namibia
Niger	56	14	2021	Report of the national civil status registry
Nigeria	43	10	2018	Demographic and health survey
Rwanda	84	26	2021	Report on vital statistics
Sao Tome and Principe	95	100	2021	Report on civil registration and vital statistics
Senegal	79	31 (2013)	2019	Demographic and health survey
Seychelles	90	90	2018	Civil registration and vital statistics department
Sierra Leone	51	16	2021	Report of the national civil status registry
Somalia	6	..	2020	Demographic and health survey
South Africa	89	96	2020	Report on civil registration and vital statistics of Statistics South Africa
South Sudan				
Sudan				
Togo	83	..	2018	Multiple indicator cluster survey

Tunisia	100	100	2021	Annual report on civil registration and vital statistics
Uganda	59	24	2016	Demographic and health survey
United Republic of Tanzania	21	10	2021	Annual report on civil registration and vital statistics
Zambia	15	20	2017	Assessment report on civil registration and vital statistics
Zimbabwe	50	50	2021	National bureau of statistics

*Source:* Self-administered questionnaire, June 2022.

### III. Improving legislative and regulatory frameworks

8. Several countries lack adequate legal frameworks to support and regulate modern civil registration and vital statistics systems. Some have adopted laws to regulate institutions and processes effectively, while others have legislation with overlapping or unclear mandates for the various entities that are involved. Almost all countries do not have sufficient regulations in place to protect personal data and enforce individual rights to privacy and the fair use of data. Furthermore, the digital nature of modern methods to capture data is not considered in many laws. Countries that have laws on civil registration and vital statistics and the periods during which the laws were enacted are presented in table 2.

Table 2

#### Existence of laws on civil registration and vital statistics in countries

Period during which laws were enacted	Countries
After 2010	Angola, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda and Sudan
Between 1990 and 2009	Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe
Before 1989	Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Uganda

*Note:* No laws have been enacted in Somalia or in South Sudan.

9. In some countries, such as Uganda, the legal framework does not include regulations on the registration of divorces or the issuance of divorce certificates; in many other countries, divorce is settled by the courts, but there is no mechanism for the transmission of the divorce judgment for registration by the national registrar. Many countries do not have a divorce

register as such; rather, the registrar mentions the court's decision in the margin of the marriage register, which is the case in many French-speaking countries.

10. Many countries still do not register customary marriages by law because the law provides only for the registration of civil marriages. Although customary marriages are common, they are not recognized and therefore not registered in the civil registration system. In cases where a customary marriage is registered, it is optional and not binding on the spouses. This situation is contrary to the recommendation made at the expert session of the fifth session of the Conference in which all African countries were encouraged to ensure that all civil, customary and religious marriages and divorces were registered.

11. In some countries, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, civil registration laws leave room for the misinterpretation of legal provisions regarding the ministry and department responsible for leading the process of improving civil registration and vital statistics at the national level.

#### **IV. Personal data and privacy protection**

12. Member States were called upon to implement the Legal Identity Agenda of the United Nations, which underpins data protection, in order to prevent manipulation and fraud. Indeed, Africa is witnessing a rise in digital civil registration and legal identity management systems, which facilitate access to personal data, including demographic and geolocation information. As a result, regulations governing the protection of personal data are increasingly important. While many African countries have adopted rules governing a general right to privacy (often in their constitutions), the adoption of laws governing the protection of personal data in the region has progressed more slowly (see table 3).

Table 3

#### **African countries with and without data protection laws**

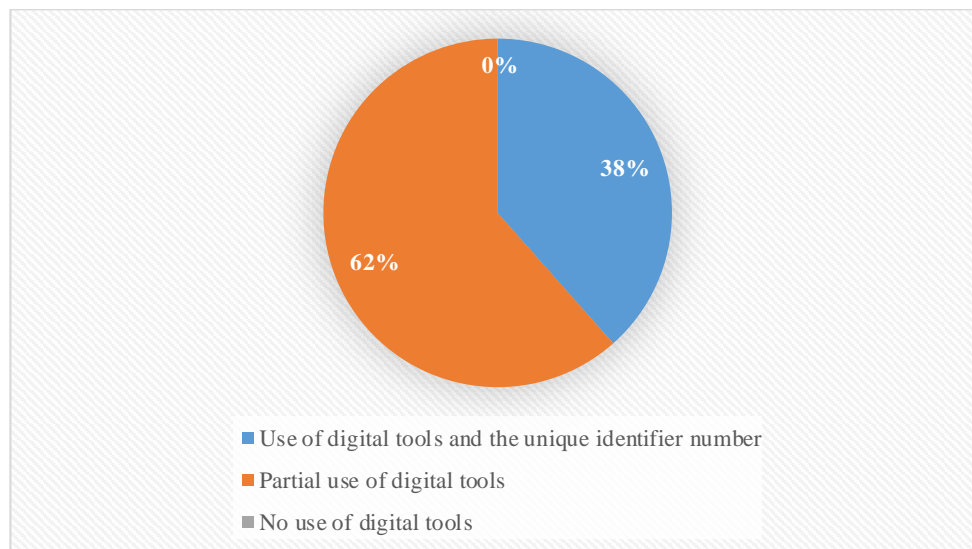
<b>Year</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Data protection law has been enacted</b>	<b>Data protection law has entered into force</b>
2001	Cabo Verde	Yes	Yes
2003	Seychelles	Yes	No
2004	Burkina Faso	Yes	Yes
2004	Tunisia	Yes	No
2008	Senegal	Yes	Yes
2009	Morocco	Yes	Yes
2009	Zambia	Yes	Yes
2011	Angola	Yes	Yes
2011	Gabon	Yes	Yes
2011	Lesotho	Yes	Yes
2012	Ghana	Yes	Yes
2013	Côte d'Ivoire	Yes	Yes
2013	Mali	Yes	Yes
2013	South Africa	Yes	No
2015	Chad	Yes	Yes
2015	Madagascar	Yes	No
2016	Equatorial Guinea	Yes	Yes

2016	Guinea	Yes	Yes
2016	Sao Tome and Principe	Yes	Yes
2017	Benin	Yes	Yes
2017	Mauritania	Yes	Yes
2017	Mauritius	Yes	Yes
2017	Niger	Yes	Yes
2018	Algeria	Yes	Yes
2018	Botswana	Yes	No
2019	Kenya	Yes	Yes
2019	Nigeria	Yes	Yes
2019	Togo	Yes	Yes
2019	Uganda	Yes	Yes
2020	Egypt	Yes	Yes
2021	Rwanda	Yes	Yes
n/a	Burundi	No	No
n/a	Cameroon	No	No
n/a	Central African Republic	No	No
n/a	Comoros	No	No
n/a	Congo	No	No
n/a	Democratic Republic of the Congo	No	No
n/a	Djibouti	No	No
n/a	Eritrea	No	No
n/a	Eswatini	No	No
n/a	Ethiopia	No	No
n/a	Gambia	No	No
n/a	Guinea-Bissau	No	No
n/a	Liberia	No	No
n/a	Libya	No	No
n/a	Malawi	No	No
n/a	Mozambique	No	No
n/a	Namibia	No	No
n/a	Sierra Leone	No	No
n/a	Somalia	No	No
n/a	South Sudan	No	No
n/a	Sudan	No	No
n/a	United Republic of Tanzania	No	No
n/a	Zimbabwe	No	No

## V. Use of information and communications technology

13. According to a survey conducted by ECA in 2021, all 25 countries that responded to the questions pertaining to information and communications technology (ICT) indicated that they used at least one form of ICT in their business process for civil registration and vital statistics (see figure I). However, many of these responses may reflect good intentions rather than actual results.

Figure I

**Percentage of countries using ICT in civil registration and vital statistics**

14. It is important to note that some uses of ICT entail small interventions that have been piloted in one or a few lower-level administrative units with support from development partners. In most cases, these new ICT systems do not seamlessly link local civil registration offices to national databases or central administrative levels. Interoperability between civil registration systems and health systems is weak, and mobile technology is surprisingly underused, as previous reports on progress in implementing recommendations of the Conference have shown.

## VI. Strengthening the national coordination mechanism

15. At various sessions of the Conference, recommendations were made to countries to establish inter-agency coordination committees, composed of staff from agencies involved in the civil registration and vital statistics systems, which would meet regularly to discuss issues affecting the optimal functioning of the civil registration and vital statistics systems in those countries. It was further recommended that the coordination committees be established on a permanent basis, that their membership and mandate be clearly defined, and that they meet regularly.

16. Of the 25 countries that responded to the questions in the 2021 survey on the establishment of a functional coordination committee, only 10 (40 per cent) reported having such a committee. This number is significantly lower than the one obtained in 2017, when the results of the survey conducted by ECA indicated that nearly three quarters of countries (74 per cent) had a high-level coordinating mechanism providing guidance on national civil registration and vital statistics systems; however, it was also indicated that the coordination system was not effective in half of those countries. This reduction may be because the 2021 survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when meetings were not yet having effective results, some countries were still limiting public gatherings and fewer development partners were sponsoring meetings.

17. Many countries have ad hoc coordination committees that are established under projects organized by development partners and function when funds for such work are provided through the projects. When these projects end, the committees also cease to exist. Coordination



mechanisms among stakeholders need to be institutionalized, formalized and activated to help to promote holistic and coordinated approaches in the country.

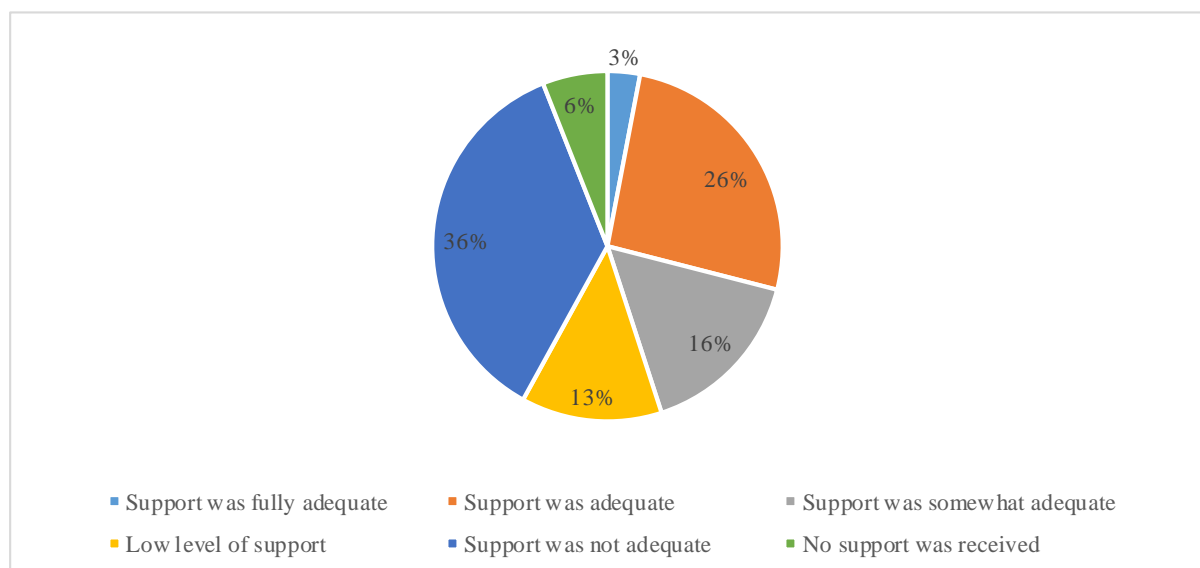
## VII. Development of national plans

18. At all sessions of the Conference, including the fifth, it has been recommended that countries undertake comprehensive assessments to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their civil registration and vital statistics systems and to learn from failures and successes, with a view to informing the development of their national improvement strategies. As a result, 74 per cent of countries have developed costed plans to improve their systems. Three countries (5 per cent) have started to develop plans, while in 11 countries (20 per cent) plans have either not been developed or their status is unknown. A full assessment has not been carried out or the status of the assessment was unknown in only 8 countries (14 per cent).

## VIII. Political commitment and resources for civil registration and vital statistics

Figure II

**Perception of countries regarding the provision of support to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems in African countries (percentage)**



*Source:* Evaluation of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems regarding the strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa (CRMC/6/EXP/2022/6-CRMC/6/MIN/2022/6).

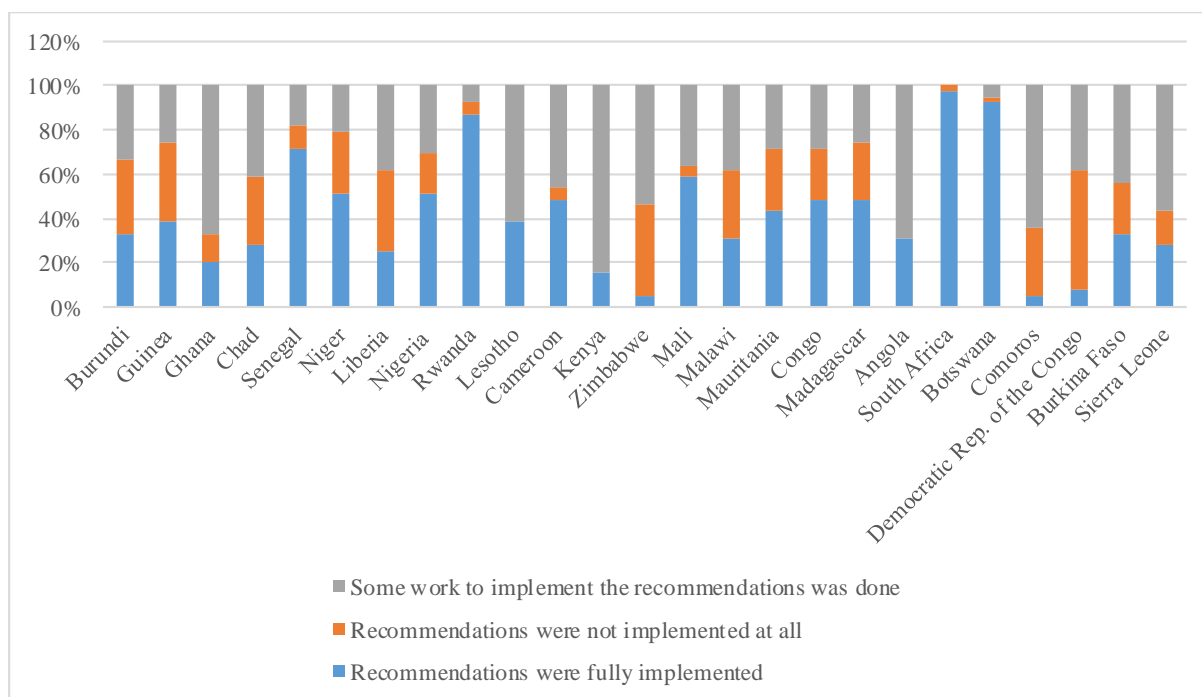
19. In a recommendation made at the fifth session of the Conference, member States were urged, with the support of the African Union Commission, ECA and the African Development Bank, to allocate greater financial, human and technical resources to initiatives to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems. Resources should be mobilized through partnerships with stakeholders, the private sector and development partners. However, as can be seen in figure II, more than half of respondents indicated that support for the mobilization of resources had not been adequate or that a low level of support or no support had been received. In contrast, a higher proportion of respondents from the regional core group, 63 per

cent, felt that support had been somewhat adequate. Given that more than half of the countries indicated that support had not been adequate and that many of them indicated the need for the mobilization of resources, this should be a key area for consideration in the future.

## IX. Summary of the status of implementation of the recommendations from the countries' perspectives.

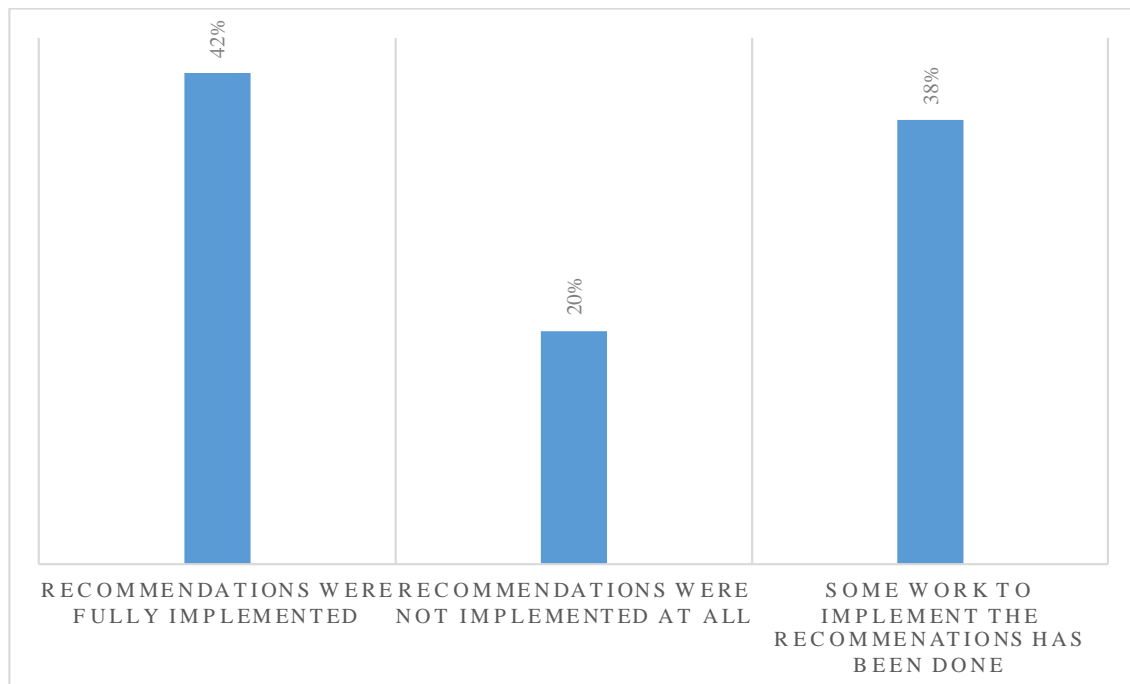
20. In summary, based on the responses from 25 countries, which equates to a response rate of 46 per cent, we present here a quantitative review of the implementation status of the recommendations. The implementation rate can be classified into three categories.<sup>3</sup> In the first category, the recommendations have been fully implemented or the implementation process has fully started. In the second category, the recommendations have been partially implemented, which means that there have been attempts to do something related to the recommendations. In the third category, nothing has been done regarding the implementation of the recommendations. The status of implementation of the recommendations can be seen for each country in Figure III. In total, 42 per cent of the recommendations have been fully implemented, 38 per cent have been partially implemented and 20 per cent have not been implemented at all (see figure IV).

Figure III  
Status of implementation of the recommendations, by country



<sup>3</sup> The recommendations of the Conference were organized into the following substantive categories: the need for capacity-building; coordination among national stakeholders; partnerships with the health sector; improved accessibility; reviews of the legislative framework on civil registration and vital statistics; adequate human and financial resources for civil registration and vital statistics programmes; monitoring and evaluation of the regional initiative and country programmes; the need for research on specific subjects, in particular on how to improve the registration of deaths and the collection of information on causes of death in Africa; and the use of ICT solutions.

Figure IV  
**Overall status of implementation of the recommendations**



21. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly 75 per cent of civil registration offices in Africa, including the effective implementation of various commitments by African Governments. Services have been disrupted or interrupted, with short- and long-term effects on the rights of individuals to access services. Much research has shown that some countries have experienced a sharp decline in civil registration rates owing to national lockdowns and movement restrictions. Given that more than half of the countries indicated that financial, human and technical resources for strengthening their civil registration and vital statistics systems were not sufficient and that many indicated the need to mobilize resources, this should be a key area for consideration in the future.

## **X. Reflections from the regional core group**

### **A. Formalization of the regional core group**

22. The establishment of the regional core group is being formalized through a memorandum of understanding that will ensure a more sustainable engagement of partners in the implementation of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems. An initial version of the memorandum was shared with partners in 2012 and signed by some of the organizations. However, owing to changes in the representation of organizations in the group, most partners were not aware of the existence of such a binding framework. The partners expressed that they found it important to have a memorandum of understanding as a tool to foster a common understanding of the purpose and working arrangements of the group. The memorandum sets out the objectives of the group, the conditions for membership, the meeting schedule and coordination arrangements for the group and the principles of engagement. It was presented and adopted at a meeting of all members of the group that was held from 27 to 29 June 2022.

## **B. Establishment of the committee of African Registrars General**

23. Since 2012, the importance of establishing a permanent forum of Registrars General has been underlined at the sessions of the Conference and at meetings of African Registrars General. The forum would, among other functions, facilitate peer-to-peer learning and the sharing of knowledge among African countries, actively monitor the implementation of decisions made at the Conference and support the activities of the secretariat of the Africa Programme.

24. In addition, in the declaration adopted at the fifth session of the Conference, held in Lusaka in October 2019, the ministers responsible for civil registration urged the African Union Commission to implement the decision on the creation of a subcommittee on civil registration and to submit the necessary documents to the relevant policy organs for consideration and adoption. Some of the activities undertaken to operationalize the subcommittee include the following:

(a) An interim committee of Registrars General was formed to lead efforts to formalize the proposed committee, working in close collaboration with the secretariat of the Africa Programme;

(b) A concept note on, and the terms of reference for, the proposed committee were prepared with the support of the secretariat of the Africa Programme;

(c) Under the leadership of the Chair of the interim committee, consultations were held with the Executive Secretary of ECA to determine the possibility of instituting a statutory committee that would report to the Conference within the reporting framework established by ECA. Such consultations were initiated following the delay in formalizing the committee under the structures of the African Union Commission;

(d) Efforts were also made by the African Union Commission to foster the institutionalization of the committee within its relevant frameworks;

(e) At the thirty-sixth ordinary session of the Executive Council of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa on 6 and 7 February 2020, the Executive Council took note of the creation of a subcommittee on civil registration, under the relevant specialized technical committee of the African Union, in accordance with the existing rules and regulations. The subcommittee was established in March 2020 as a subcommittee of the Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration of the African Union. The members of the subcommittee will be the ministers in charge of civil registration, or their duly accredited representatives, of all members States of the African Union. Meetings of the subcommittee will be preceded by meetings of experts in the domain of civil registration.

## **C. Improving the registration of deaths and mortality statistics**

25. African countries face considerable challenges in developing health interventions, building health systems, measuring and monitoring mortality data, and reporting on progress made against national and global development goals and mortality targets. Levels of death registration in most African countries are abysmally low, and the recording and compilation of information on causes of death is almost non-existent. At the fifth session of the Conference, African ministers took note of the situation and called upon pan-African organizations to take urgent action to assist African States in establishing systems for registering deaths and

collecting information on causes of death in real time. While civil registration and vital statistics systems are the best sources of reliable, real-time mortality data, those systems are still under development in many parts of the world, including Africa. To fill the data gap, a continental mortality surveillance framework was developed as an alternative methodology to generate the required information. The framework was launched on 30 September 2022 in Lusaka. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and other members of the regional core group are providing guidance and support to Member States to mobilize the resources needed to strengthen mortality surveillance systems and civil registration and vital statistics systems.

26. Following the development of the strategy, a meeting of experts on mortality statistics was held to discuss the five-year mortality statistics strategy for the systematic improvement of regional and country mortality registration and statistics in Africa, with the aim of developing a pool of experts in the improvement of mortality statistics as part of efforts to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems.

27. A key challenge faced by countries in Africa is the lack of guidance on how to improve the registration of deaths, given that most deaths occur outside medical institutions. To address this issue, ECA, with the support of the regional core group, has undertaken the development of a practical guide to design and implement the most appropriate business processes for the registration of deaths. The guide covers the entire civil registration and vital statistics value chain, from the reporting of deaths to the compilation and dissemination of death statistics. A workshop was held in 2020 to seek input from African countries and validate the proposed structure of the guide.

28. In addition to the guide, it was realized that there is a need for further in-depth research in the form of country case studies on current practices in the registration of deaths and the processes for collecting information on causes of death. The results of this research should complement the guide in identifying best practices and examples of bottlenecks in the registration of deaths and the processes for collecting information on causes of death in various settings, and contribute to guiding countries in developing a business process best suited for their specific settings. Both the practical guide and the research template are under development.

#### **D. Producing vital statistics from civil registration records**

29. Another key area of support identified by the regional core group concerns efforts to build the capacity of African countries to produce vital statistics from their civil registers. This was reiterated at the fifth session of the Conference. To assist countries in that regard, ECA, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, has developed a training manual on the production of vital statistics from civil registers. Guidelines and a template for the preparation of reports on vital statistics have been developed jointly with Statistics Norway.

#### **E. Other initiatives**

30. The regional core group supported the development of operational guidelines on advocacy, awareness-raising, education and communication. In coordination with the Africa Programme, it developed guidelines and recommendations for maintaining and managing civil registration and vital statistics in conflict and emergency situations. ECA and other members of the core group, in coordination with the World Bank, have developed a global e-learning

course on civil registration and vital statistics. The course is helping to build the capacity of its users in various areas of civil registration and vital statistics systems.

## **XI. United Nations Legal Identity Agenda**

31. At the fifth session of the Conference, the African ministers responsible for civil registration recommended that all countries on the continent be encouraged to ensure the implementation of the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda, which is an integrated and holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management. The ministers agreed that a person's identity should begin at birth and be maintained throughout the life cycle from birth to death by means of a unique identification number assigned at birth and used throughout the individual's life.

32. To implement the Legal Identity Agenda, 13 African countries were initially selected as pilot countries.<sup>4</sup> These countries are piloting initiatives aimed at establishing a holistic and integrated civil registration, vital statistics and identity management system, led by United Nations bodies that work in collaboration with their government counterparts and other technical and financial partners. Additional countries that have expressed interest in implementing the Agenda are also being onboarded and supported in their efforts to realize holistic and interoperable identity management systems.

33. The 13 pilot countries are receiving technical and financial support from ECA and other partners in the implementation of the Legal Identity Agenda. The funding varies from seed money to enable some of the initial work to be carried out, to building digitalization capacity in some countries to facilitate global mobility, interoperability and, subsequently, the sharing of data and information in real-time between different systems. The support provided enables national stakeholders to mobilize more funds on the ground in order to implement a much broader project to ensure legal identity for all, from birth to death, in a holistic, coordinated and sustainable manner.

## **XII. Mentorship programme**

34. The civil registration and vital statistics mentorship programme was conceived as an innovative and unprecedented initiative to support countries in their efforts to achieve universal civil registration, anchored in the collective action of partners engaged in the Africa Programme, with investments geared towards continuous and cost-effective support and with priority given to strategies that lead to quick and effective results.

35. The mentorship programme is implemented in 14 countries with a history of low civil registration coverage and completeness. Countries were selected to ensure diversity in the representation of subregions, experiences with colonial systems and histories of civil conflict or war that affected civil registration systems.

## **XIII. Annual commemoration of the African Day of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics**

36. The African Union has declared the period from 2017 to 2026 as the decade for accelerated improvement of civil registration and vital statistics and 10 August as the day to

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<sup>4</sup> Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

commemorate civil registration and vital statistics across the continent. As a result, since 2019 members of the regional core group have supported the annual commemoration events organized by most countries, during which countries have renewed their commitments to improving their civil registration and vital statistics systems. The commemoration is an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of civil registration across population groups.

#### **XIV. Efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

37. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ECA and members of the regional core group provided technical assistance to rebuild the civil registration and vital statistics systems affected by the pandemic. Such assistance included:

(a) Assessments of the impact of the pandemic on civil registration operations and technical guidance on maintaining civil registration and vital statistics programmes during the pandemic;

(b) Webinars on mitigating the impact of the pandemic on civil registration operations, developing innovative solutions, such as e-notifications, to promote business continuity, and the sharing of lessons learned from Europe and Asia and the Pacific on ensuring business continuity for the operation of civil registration and vital statistics systems during the pandemic;

(c) Knowledge briefs on the linkages among challenges relating to gender, civil registration and vital statistics and COVID-19, developed in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems of the International Development Research Centre.

#### **XV. Promoting the sharing of knowledge**

38. To facilitate learning among countries and to enable countries to benefit from each other's experiences in the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems, ECA and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific organized a two-day interregional seminar in Addis Ababa to exchange ideas and discuss best practices relating to civil registration and vital statistics in Africa and Asia and the Pacific. During the seminar, representatives of countries from both regions identified common challenges in the implementation of civil registration and vital statistics programmes and various mitigating strategies adopted by countries. The following areas were covered: improving the accessibility of civil registration services, including accessibility for remote and nomadic populations; creating demand for the registration of all vital events; enhancing coordination among national stakeholders and development partners; digitalizing civil registration and vital statistics systems; ensuring sustainability and political commitment to improving civil registration and vital statistics systems; building the capacity of national civil registration and vital statistics officials; monitoring the performance of the systems and registration completeness; and building demand for the production of vital statistics from civil registration.

39. The regional core group launched a website that provides a platform for the sharing and exchange of knowledge products and information on civil registration and vital statistics among countries, development partners and training and research institutions. The platform is intended to foster partnerships, networking and collaboration; facilitate resource management; monitor improvement efforts; coordinate the activities of the regional core group and other development

partners; and support Member States in reporting on their progress and improvement efforts. The website has recently experienced some technical problems, which are being resolved.

## **XVI. Establishment of a monitoring framework**

40. Responding to the call made by the African ministers responsible for civil registration at the fifth session of the Conference to develop results-based monitoring and evaluation systems and tools to monitor and report on progress on civil registration and vital statistics, the secretariat of the Africa Programme developed a framework to document and monitor the progress made by Member States in the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems. The monitoring form, to be completed by a designated focal point from the civil registration office, is intended as a tool to review on an annual basis the progress made in civil registration and vital statistics, with each review entailing a systematic assessment of the status of implementation of the civil registration and vital statistics action plan in order to identify bottlenecks and take the corrective measures necessary to accelerate the pace of reform. The review process is envisaged to be consultative in nature, involving the main stakeholders in each country.

## **XVII. Other resources developed for countries**

41. The following resources have been identified or are being developed to assist countries to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems, some of which need to be adapted to the needs of the region.

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Author</b>
Civil registration and vital statistics digitization guidebook	<a href="http://www.crvs-dgb.org/en/">http://www.crvs-dgb.org/en/</a>	Commissioned by the African Development Bank, for the African Programme for the Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, and developed jointly by Plan International and Jembi Health Systems
Civil registration and vital statistics performance metrics toolkit	<a href="https://crvsgateway.info/CRVS-performance-metrics-data-collection-tool~3081">https://crvsgateway.info/CRVS-performance-metrics-data-collection-tool~3081</a>	Developed for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
“Analysis of causes of (national) death for action” mortality data Tool	<a href="https://crvsgateway.info/ANACONDA-Mortality-Data-Quality-Assessment-Tool~686">https://crvsgateway.info/ANACONDA-Mortality-Data-Quality-Assessment-Tool~686</a>	Developed for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
Civil registration and vital statistics costing tool	<a href="https://crvsgateway.info/CRVS-Costing-Tool~3122">https://crvsgateway.info/CRVS-Costing-Tool~3122</a>	Developed for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
Verbal autopsy tools	<a href="https://crvsgateway.info/Automated-verbal-autopsy-tools~345">https://crvsgateway.info/Automated-verbal-autopsy-tools~345</a>	Developed for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute



<i>Compendium of Good Practices in Linking Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and Identity Management Systems</i>	<a href="http://www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/CRVS_Compndium_eWEB_0.pdf">http://www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/CRVS_Compndium_eWEB_0.pdf</a>	Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems
<i>Revealing the Toll of COVID-19: A Technical Package for Rapid Mortality Surveillance and Epidemic Response</i>	<a href="https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/revealing-the-toll-of-covid-19-a-technical-package-for-rapid-mortality-surveillance-and-epidemic-response/">https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/revealing-the-toll-of-covid-19-a-technical-package-for-rapid-mortality-surveillance-and-epidemic-response/</a>	Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems
Country profiles	<a href="https://crvssystems.ca/country-profiles">https://crvssystems.ca/country-profiles</a>	Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems
Synthesis and technical briefs on civil registration and vital statistics and COVID-19 in Africa	<a href="https://crvssystems.ca/news-and-events/new-release-crvs-covid-19-africa-series">https://crvssystems.ca/news-and-events/new-release-crvs-covid-19-africa-series</a>	Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems
<i>Civil Registration and Identification Glossary</i>	<a href="https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Civil-Registration-and-Identification-Glossary.pdf">https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Civil-Registration-and-Identification-Glossary.pdf</a>	Inter-American Development Bank
Comprehensive assessment tool	<a href="https://crvsgateway.info/Comprehensive-assessment-tool~709">https://crvsgateway.info/Comprehensive-assessment-tool~709</a>	University of Queensland, in collaboration with the World Health Organization
<i>Implementation of the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda: United Nations Country Team Operational Guidelines</i>	<a href="https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/documents/UNCT-Guidelines.pdf">https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/documents/UNCT-Guidelines.pdf</a>	United Nations Legal Identity Task Force
<i>Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Legal and Regulatory Review: Tools and Methodology</i>	<a href="https://www.vitalstrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CRVS-Legal-Toolkit_11_29_17.pdf">https://www.vitalstrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CRVS-Legal-Toolkit_11_29_17.pdf</a>	Vital Strategies and the Global Health Advocacy Incubator, as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative
<i>CRVS Improvement Framework</i>	<a href="https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/crvs-systems-improvement-framework/">https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/crvs-systems-improvement-framework/</a>	Economic Commission for Africa and the regional core group
<i>Production of a Vital Statistics Report: Guide with Accompanying Template and Workbook</i>	<a href="https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/production-of-a-vital-statistics-report">https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/production-of-a-vital-statistics-report</a>	Vital Strategies, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and Statistics Norway
Online training tool on the International Statistical	<a href="https://crvsgateway.info/WHO-ICD-online-training-tool~554">https://crvsgateway.info/WHO-ICD-online-training-tool~554</a>	World Health Organization

Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems		
Medical certificate of cause of death and assessment tool	<a href="https://crvsgateway.info/Medical-certificate-of-cause-of-death-and-assessment-tool~577">https://crvsgateway.info/Medical-certificate-of-cause-of-death-and-assessment-tool~577</a>	World Health Organization
e-learning course in civil registration and vital statistics systems	<a href="https://olc.worldbank.org/content/civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-systems-basic-level-self-paced-format">https://olc.worldbank.org/content/civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-systems-basic-level-self-paced-format</a>	World Bank Group

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