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Issue paper

Civil Registration and vital statistics for progress monitoring on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

I. Introduction

1.   In January 2015, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* and the first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023). Agenda 2063 is Africa's transformative development framework to achieve accelerated, sustained and inclusive economic growth that leads to sound, resilient and inclusive socioeconomic development on the continent. It has 7 aspirations, 20 goals and 34 priority areas, 171 national targets, 85 continental targets and 246 indicators. On 25 September 2015, resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was adopted. The 2030 Agenda, which is rooted in universal rights and driven by the key principle of "leaving no one behind", contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets.

2.   African countries are required to report their progress on the implementation of both global and continental Agendas in an integrated manner. Many countries are in the process of aligning the global and continental development goals with their national development priorities, which requires a large amount of data and efforts to harmonize and integrate the diverse data requirements into their country's development plans. The realization of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 requires the registering of every vital event and the collecting, compiling, producing and disseminating of statistics relating to the events in a regular and continuous manner in order to guide policy and inform the planning process.

3.   Using vital statistics also enable all stakeholders to track progress and make any adjustments necessary to ensure transparency and mutual accountability. Obtaining reliable, timely, disaggregated and high quality statistical data is critical for both planning and implementation, and for monitoring and evaluation purposes at local, regional and global levels – which is more so when it comes to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The measurement of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (the 2030 Agenda) and those contained in Agenda 2063 necessitates investing massively in producing statistics to fill the gaps that limit the generation of quality, relevant, timely and comparable data, including capacity gaps and uses of information and communication technology[1]

4.   A well-functioning civil registration system identifies and recognizes every individual in the society and provides legal identity to individuals, including the right to a name and a nationality. Legal identity helps to prove, implement and realize many of the human rights embodied in the international conventions and declarations that avoid discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, and based on colour, race and ethnic group. Birth registration certificate, as legal document and proof of age, helps to prevent violations of child rights, including child marriage, child labour and trafficking, the use of child soldiers in conflict zones in a country or cross-border conflict, which is common practice on the African continent.

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[1] Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Development Programme, OpenData and World Wide Web Foundation (2016). The Africa data revolution report 2016: highlighting developments in African data ecosystems. Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa. Available from www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/ACS/africa-data-revolution-report-2016.pdf.

5.   Birth registration and certificate uniquely identify individuals and help them to obtain a national identity card to ensure that they have access to diverse social services, such as the right to health service and the right to education, social welfare benefits. It enhances social and financial inclusion of individuals and creates further opportunities to improve their livelihoods, and eligibility for the various current social protection schemes in the countries, such as a pension and safety net. It also ensures financial inclusion of citizens to have access to microfinance, to use modern banking services for transfer and collection of payments and remittances, as well as for inheritance cases and purchase and sale of property. A well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system also offers opportunity for registration and legal recognition of persons considered stateless or persons in emergencies for protecting human rights.

6.   Population censuses, sample surveys and administrative data, including civil registration are the main sources of data used to inform the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. A census, however, is conducted infrequently (once every 10 years) and sample surveys are affected by sampling errors and do not cover the entire population. Censuses and surveys do not provide legal identity to individuals and detailed statistical data on cause of death and information on marriage and divorce. In addition, the information from these sources is prone to errors, such as underreporting, misstatements and recall lapse. A well-functioning civil registration system has statistical advantages over censuses and sample surveys because it provides reliable disaggregated data at any geographical or administrative level, at a relatively low cost.

7.   In addition, data obtained through complete and accurate civil registration processes are not subject to sampling errors and contain few response errors. A complete and efficient system is, therefore, essential to fill the gaps in the generation of timely, complete and accurate data for the implementation and monitoring of both the continental and the global development Agendas. Strengthening CRVS systems in Africa is an imperative for successful implementation and monitoring of the progress towards achieving Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. Disaggregated data by age, gender, geographical location is also necessary to better target support to groups at risk of being left behind in the development process.

8.   Vital statistics generated from civil registration records provide Governments with up-to-date and disaggregated statistics on population size, growth and distribution to support evidence-based decision-making for the envisaged socioeconomic transformation of Africa and tackle poverty and all forms of inequality. Vital statistics provide regular and complete population data for effective social development planning, such as food security, clean water, housing, hospitals, schools and roads. Without basic information on the numbers of births, deaths, cause of death, fertility and mortality rates, it would be difficult for any country to measure and carry out human development programmes at national and local levels. The population size, sex and age compositions and urban-rural distribution of population, obtained through civil registration systems, help to identify the target population and determine the appropriate denominators required for the measurement of population-based indicators at all administrative levels.

9.   At present, African Governments are exerting major efforts towards speeding up subregional and regional integration processes. With regard to political unity, speeding up the regional integration process is a critical success factor for shared prosperity and peace, as echoed in Agenda 2063. Political unity of Africa will be the culmination of the integration process,

including the free movement of people, the establishment of the continental institutions, and full economic and social integration. All of these initiatives of the African Heads of State and Government call upon States to increase their liberalization policies and practices, including free movement of people and labour, among others. A well-functioning CRVS system will have a critical role in facilitating the priority agenda of ensuring legal identity for ease of cross-border mobility of people and labour, and the opportunity to utilize health, education and other services, thereby discouraging discrimination and marginalization, enhancing human rights and expanding social inclusion.

10.   In general, 12 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and more than one third of the targets require data from CRVS systems directly or indirectly. CRVS systems are, therefore, indispensable for the effective implementation of universal and inclusive policies and programmes, which in turn, are essential towards achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

11.   CRVS directly relates to some of the targets and indicators, such as measuring the "proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority" (target 16.9 indicator 16.9.1 of the 2030 Agenda). Target 17.19 of the 2030 Agenda and goal 18 target 5 of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 also show the importance of birth registration for ensuring the legal identity of an individual (see tables 1–3). According to the 2016 edition of the Sustainable Development Goals report,[2] "registering children at birth is the first step in securing recognition before the law and safeguarding individual rights and access to justice and social services" (goal 16, p. 43).

12.   In addition to directly measuring the development and improvement of CRVS, data from complete and accurate CRVS systems can also provide the information used to monitor other targets and indicators, such as child mortality rates and maternal mortality ratios. Collecting and disseminating real-time cause-of-death information (acquired as part of the death registration process) can help to tackle many of the health and environment-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, in particular those that require an emergency response.

13.   In addition, a population census, when updated continuously through births and deaths recorded in CRVS systems, can provide population data in a dynamic way that can be used as denominators for measuring all the population-based indicators in the global set of Sustainable Development Goal indicators. In general, building a modern and well-functioning CRVS system based on reliable, timely and disaggregated data, while also enhancing the overall statistical capacity at the continental level will be instrumental for proper monitoring, which can contribute towards the successful implementation of both continental and global development Agendas.

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[2] Available at www.un.org.lb/Library/Assets/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2016-Global.pdf.

II. Issues for discussion

14. The recent monitoring results of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (APAI-CRVS) show that many countries in the region have national identity systems that provide identity documents to their citizens. Some of the countries have a computerized identification database that assigns the individual with a unique identity number. Only a few countries, however, have their identification database linked to the civil registration system. In tackling this issue, the following questions should be considered:

(a) What are the challenges and opportunities for countries to integrate a civil registration system into a national identification management system?

(b) What actions are required by countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal target 16.9: "By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration"?

15. Death registration and medical certification of cause of death in particular are challenging for many countries in the region. Only a few countries are able to collect, compile and publish cause-of-death statistics using the standard international form and international classification of diseases codes. In many countries of the region, most of the deaths occur at home and outside health facilities, therefore, it is challenging to get medical certificates for the causes of deaths. In meeting this challenge, the following questions should be considered:

(a) How can countries improve the production of timely and quality vital statistics, including cause of death, that are relevant to national development plans and meet the requirements of monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063?

(b) How can countries use the Verbal autopsy technique at scale to determine a probable cause of death for most of the deaths that occur outside health facilities?

Table 1
Sustainable Development Goal targets directly linked to civil registration and vital statistics systems

Sustainable Development Goal target	Agenda 2063 targets	Indicators	Data items from CRVS
16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	18.5: End all forms of violence, child labour exploitation, child marriage and human trafficking	16.9.1: Proportion of children under 5 years whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age 18.5.2: The proportion of children whose births are registered within the first year	Numerator (births registered) and denominator (children <5)
17.19: By 2030… support statistical capacity-building in countries	19.4: National statistical system fully functional	17.19.2: Proportion of countries that have conducted at least one population and housing census in	Number of countries established well-

| | | the last 10 years and have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration

19.4.4: Proportion of funding allocated to implementation of a functional civil registration system. | functioning CRVS systems; Completeness rates of birth and death registrations. |

Table 2

Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators relating to health and wellbeing goals

Sustainable Development Goal target	Agenda 2063 targets	Indicators	Data items from CRVS
3.1: By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	3.3: Reduce 2013 maternal, neo-natal and child mortality rates by at least 50 per cent	3.1.1: Maternal mortality ratio

3.1.2: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel | Numerator (deaths by cause) and denominator (live births) |
| 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births | 3.3: Reduce 2013 maternal, neo-natal and child mortality rates by at least 50 per cent | 3.2.1: Under-five mortality rate

3.2.2: Neonatal mortality rate | Numerator (deaths by cause) and denominator (live births)

Numerator (deaths by cause) and denominator (live births) |
| 3.4: By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing | No matching | 3.4.1: Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease

3.4.2: Suicide mortality rate | Numerator (deaths by cause) and denominator (population) |
| 3.6: By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents | No matching | 3.6.1: Death rate due to road traffic injuries | Numerator (deaths by cause) and denominator (population) |
| 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination | No matching | 3.9.1: Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution

3.9.2: Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene | Numerator (deaths by cause) and denominator (population) |
| 1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure | 7.3.3: Reduce deaths and property loss from natural and | 1.5.1: Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people | Numerator (deaths by cause) and |

and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	man-made disasters and climate extreme events by at least 30 per cent	(a) Number of people killed, injured, displaced, evacuated, relocated or affected by disasters.	denominator (population)
16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.	12.2.3: Reduce local conflicts to zero by 2020	16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age 16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause.	Numerator (deaths by cause) and denominator (population)

Table 3
Other Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 targets requiring population denominotors

Sustainable Development Goal target	Agenda 2063 targets	Indicators	Data items from CRVS
1.1: By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than US$1.25 a day	1.2.1: Reduce 2013 levels of poverty by at least 30 per cent.	1.1.1: Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural) Percentage of population living below the national poverty line by sex	Denominator (population)
1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	1.2.2: Reduce poverty amongst women by at least 50 per cent	1.2.1: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	Denominator (population desegregated by sex and age)
1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems, … and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	1.3.1: At least 30 per cent of vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, older persons and children provided with social protection.	1.3.1: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, pregnant women, newborns, etc.

Percentage of eligible population covered by social protection floors/systems, disaggregated by sex, composed of the following:

(a) Percentage of older persons receiving a pension;
(b) Percentage of households with children receiving child support;
(c) Percentage of working-age persons without jobs receiving support; | Denominator (population desegregated by sex and age) |

		(d) Percentage of persons with disabilities receiving benefits; (e) Percentage of women receiving maternity benefits at childbirth; (f) Percentage of workers covered against occupational injury; (g) Percentage of poor and vulnerable people receiving benefits.	
2.2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	1.2.5: Reduce stunting in children to 10 per cent and underweight to 5 per cent. 3.1.7: Reduce 2013 the level of prevalence of malnutrition by at least 50 per cent	2.2.1: Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age 2.2.2: Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight) Prevalence of stunting among children under 5	Denominator (children < 5)
3.3: By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other communicable diseases	3.1.6: Reduce the 2013 incidence of HIV/AIDs, malaria and tuberculosis by at least 80 per cent	3.3.1: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations 3.3.3: Malaria incidence per 1,000 population 3.3.4: Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population 3.3.5: Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	Denominator (total and desegregated population)
3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	3.1.2: Increase 2013 levels of access to sexual and reproductive health services to women by at least 30 per cent	3.7.1: Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods 3.7.2: Adolescent birth rate (aged 10–14 years; aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	Denominator (women population aged 15–49) Annual number of births (to females aged 10–19 years) and denominator (female population aged 10–19)

3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	3.1.1: Increase 2013 levels of access to quality basic healthcare and services by at least 40 per cent	3.8.1: Coverage of essential health services…	Denominator (population)
4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	2.1.1: Enrolment rate for early childhood education is at least 300 per cent of the 2013 rate	4.2.1: Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial wellbeing, by sex	Denominator (children <5)
8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, …and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms	18.1.5: End all forms of violence, child labour exploitation and child marriage and human trafficking 18.1.6: Recruitment of child soldiers is ended	8.7.1: Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	Birth certificate as legal proof of age of a child; denominator (population aged 5–17)
11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	1.4.1: Reduce the 2013 national housing deficit by at least 10 per cent 1.4.2: Reduce urban slums by at least 20 per cent	11.1.1: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing	Denominator (population)
16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.	18.1.5: End all forms of violence, child labour exploitation and child marriage and human trafficking.	16.2.1: Proportion of children aged 1–17 experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month 16.2.2: Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	Denominator(children aged 1–17) Denominator (population disaggregated by sex and age).

Sources: 2017 Africa Sustain Development Report: Tracking progress on Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Available at www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/en_agenda2063_sdg-web.pdf.; and Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. Available at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/27533/115150.pdf.