



**Preparatory Meeting of Experts for the Fifth Conference  
of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration**  
Lusaka, 14-16 October 2019

CRMCS/EXP/2019/2

## **Annotated provisional agenda**

### **Conference theme**

*Innovative Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems:  
Foundation for Legal Identity Management*



**APAI-CRVS**  
Everyone visible in Africa



**Decade for Repositioning  
of Civil Registration and  
Vital Statistics in Africa  
2017-2026**



## **Session 1: Opening session**

### 1.1 Welcoming remarks

Representatives of the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union Commission will make welcoming remarks. A representative of the host country Government will open the Meeting.

### 1.2 Election of the Bureau

The composition of the Bureau will be announced by the African Union Commission following consultations with heads of delegations. The Bureau will be made up of five members as follows: one Chair, three Vice-Chairs and one Rapporteur, elected on the basis of equitable geographic representation.

### 1.3 Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

Participants will be invited to consider and adopt the draft agenda and programme of work, and any proposed amendments, as deemed necessary.

### 1.4 Objectives of the meeting

The African Union Commission will deliver a short presentation highlighting the main objectives and expected outcomes of the Meeting.

### 1.5 Report on progress pursuant to the ministerial declarations and on the status of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in Africa

The APAI-CRVS secretariat will present highlights of the document: Progress made pursuant to the ministerial declarations (CRMC5/2019/2). This report reviews the progress made by the regional CRVS programme since its inception in 2010, with emphasis on progress made since 2017.

## **Session 2: Civil registration as the foundation for legal identity systems**

### 2.1 UN Legal Identity Agenda

The objective of the UN Legal Identity Agenda is the integration of CRVS and ID management. The UN Legal Identity Expert Group will make a presentation.

### 2.2 Taking a holistic approach to legal identity: good practices from integrating CRVS and identity systems around the world

The importance of a holistic approach in linking CRVS and ID management systems will be discussed based on best practices from around the world. The presentation is by the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, will be presented. The presentation will touch on a series of country case studies and a synthesis of the lessons and main messages emerging from each case (CRMC5/2019/22).

### 2.3 Importance of CRVS and identity management for durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees

Globally, more than one billion people lack identity papers, which, in the modern world, results in the exclusion of those people from services and socioeconomic participation. In addition, it limits their access, for example, to work, housing, mobile phones and bank accounts. The report by the African Union Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) posits that a legal identity for every individual is of utmost importance to make a difference in the lives of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and other forcibly displaced persons (CRMC5/2019/6).

### 2.4 The state of CRVS and national identity management in Africa

Informed decisions about the allocation of finance and resources result in an end to poverty, increase the resilience of the world's most vulnerable people, and ensure no one is left behind. These decisions need to be underpinned by good-quality, transparent data and evidence on poverty and resources, and lead to increased accountability and sustainable long-term outcomes. The point is made in the report that for CRVS to be robust and sustainable, it needs to be digital and it needs to be linked to a national identity number (CRMC5/2019/27).

### 2.5 Integrating CRVS systems and legal identity management in the digital era

The need to integrate civil registration and legal identity has become inevitable as Africa responds to the key issues of leaving no one behind and inclusion as expressed in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. About one billion people in the world today, of whom approximately half are in Africa, cannot prove who they are and therefore lack “legal identity”. The civil registration system represents the basic building blocks of an identity ecosystem. A fundamental and systemic principle is that the civil registration system should serve as the basis for individual identification and for the recording of “entry into” and “exit from” the population registers (CRMC5/2019/7).

## **Session 3: Innovative approaches in CRVS systems improvement**

### 3.1 CRVS digitization and innovation: an Eastern Africa and Southern Africa perspective

The issues paper reviews recent discussions on the role of digital identity (including foundational versus functional) within the larger legal identity constructs, as well as decentralization of registration services and registration of children on the move. Recent trends towards digitization, best practices in business optimization and service design, open standards, unique identifiers, system ownership and sustainability, and linkages with other social sectors, such as health, will be discussed. The report is based on case studies from selected countries. The question is no longer if CRVS systems should be digitized across the region, rather, what processes and best practices should be followed (CRMC5/2019/8).

### 3.2 Electronic CRVS systems: what countries need to consider in the modernization process

Most countries in Africa are in the process of modernizing their CRVS systems. A decision that countries often make is whether to build tailor-made software or procure commercial off-the-shelf CRVS software. Another decision is whether to use a local data centre (server) or cloud

service. This session will highlight the pros and cons of each. Additionally, a process for digitization of paper birth registers in the Gambia will be presented (CRM5/2019/9).

#### **Session 4: Reviewing progress and implementation challenges**

##### **4.1 Civil registration in emergencies – recommendations and guidelines for implementation**

The African continent is currently hosting more than a third of the world's displaced populations, including millions of refugees and asylum seekers and even greater number of internally displaced people. In almost all emergency situations, such as in armed conflicts, natural disasters, human-made hazards and mass population displacements, vital event registration systems become dysfunctional, poorly operational and – in extreme cases – they collapse entirely.

In the Yamoussoukro Declaration of 2015, the African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration requested development partners to prepare guidelines and recommendations for the effective organization of civil registration services for emergency and humanitarian contexts. These guidelines are being developed by UNICEF in response to the Yamoussoukro Declaration (CRM5/2019/10).

##### **4.2 The CRVS systems improvement framework**

ECA and Vital Strategies, in collaboration with the Africa CRVS Core Group, have developed the CRVS improvement framework to serve as a second generation planning tool for CRVS improvement. The framework takes into consideration upgrades and innovative approach to a process-centric approach in planning, implementing and monitoring CRVS activities. It will serve users as a single end-to-end guide for CRVS improvement (CRM5/2019/11).

##### **4.3 Guidelines for drafting memorandums of understanding for better coordination among national stakeholders of CRVS systems at country level**

The success or failure of the CRVS system, as a shared outcome, depends to a large extent on the strength of the cooperation framework enshrined in legal documents, including memorandums of understanding. The purpose of guidelines on drafting memorandums of understanding is to assist African countries in their effort to improve their CRVS systems with a formal and effective framework for stakeholders' coordination (CRM5/2019/12).

##### **4.4 Snapshot of CRVS prepared for 12 African countries**

Brief reports on the status of CRVS systems have been prepared by the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa for each of the following 12 countries: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania (reporting on Mainland Tanzania only), and Uganda.

The information was collected through a questionnaire completed by the civil registration agencies in each country in December 2018 and supplemented by desk review of available documents. The country reports can be found on the webpage of the Centre of Excellence - <https://crvssystems.ca>.

#### 4.5 Integrating mortality surveillance to strengthen CRVS systems

In response to the need for improved quality and utilization of mortality data, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) initiated a mortality surveillance programme to promote innovations aimed at improving registration of births and deaths and recording causes of death. The programme is important for evidence-based planning and monitoring of public health programmes by building capacities and capabilities within the African continent (CRMC5/2019/13).

### **Session 5: Towards accelerated improvement of CRVS systems in African countries**

#### Parallel session 5.1

##### 5.1.1 Marriage and divorce registration in Africa: a neglected yet important component of a fully functional CRVS system

The report expands on recent research undertaken by ECA and other data sources that focus on the registration of marriage and divorce. It aims to impress upon relevant CRVS stakeholders in Africa the importance of prioritizing the registration of these events and to encourage the recognition of the challenges to marriage registration in Africa in the light of the varied types of marriage practiced. The ways that governments are contending with these challenges are showcased, including through population censuses (CRMC5/2019/16).

##### 5.1.2 Potentials of data linkages from CRVS and other systems in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals: the case of road safety

Road accidents are the cause of death of 1.35 million people every year and tens of millions more are left injured or disabled. Road traffic death rates in Africa are the highest in the world. Given that target 3.6 of Sustainable Development Goal 3 relates to road safety, the report explores the potential of linking data to assist governments in their efforts to fulfil their 2030 Agenda reporting requirements on road safety. The report also highlights areas where data gaps exist in the region and explores the use of various data sources, including CRVS systems that could be considered for road safety monitoring (CRMC5/2019/15).

##### 5.1.3 Strengthening linkages between civil registration and the health sector for better health and improved civil registration systems: the cases of Uganda and Liberia

African countries are increasingly realizing the importance of taking a multisectoral approach in strengthening civil registration systems, particularly through linkages with the health sector. Civil registration offices in several African countries are now being proactive in strengthening their collaboration with the health sector to improve their access to information about births, deaths and causes of death. This results in a boost in civil registration coverage and completeness for the benefit of both sectors (CRMC5/2019/14).

## Parallel session 5.2

### 5.2.1 Vital statistics from civil registration records and their relevance in monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

The report highlights the valuable role of vital statistics as a product of a civil registration system, its relevance to implementation of the 2030 Agenda and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and national development frameworks. The CRVS outcome process is key to monitoring and reporting on the related targets and is also important in identifying and reporting on people with legal identity and those who are stateless. The discussion is expected to focus on the importance of publishing vital statistics reports in Africa (CRMC5/2019/17).

### 5.2.2 Good practices in linking CRVS and identity management systems: case studies from around the world

The Compendium of Good Practices in Linking CRVS and ID Management Systems, developed by the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, will be presented. Through a series of country case studies and a synthesis of the lessons and main messages emerging from each case, the compendium aims to offer practical examples for national and international practitioners working to establish holistic identity management systems (CRMC5/2019/22).

### 5.2.3 Evaluation of the completeness and quality of civil registration systems and the production of vital statistics reports

Only a few countries in Africa regularly produce and publish vital statistics reports based on civil registration system data. Technical challenges and lack of expertise on how to compile statistics impede regular assessment and monitoring of such data, resulting in a compromised registration system and an unreliable means of evaluating the quality of statistics produced. To counter these trends, ECA has developed *Guidelines and Template for Developing a Vital Statistics Report*, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) of the United Nations and Statistics Norway. The report shares country experiences in compiling and producing vital statistics, and of disseminating and communicating the results (CRMC5/2019/18).

## Parallel session 5.3

### 5.3.1 Digitization of CRVS: towards information and communications technology assets for CRVS in Africa

This report explores the challenges faced by African countries in moving from paper-based and manual CRVS systems to digital systems that enable effective and efficient civil registration services. The report considers the widely endorsed Principles for Digital Development and how those principles can be applied to build secure, interoperable systems that respond to the needs of users. Examples illustrating the application of those principles are from genuine CRVS digitization projects (CRMC5/2019/19).

### 5.3.2 The iCIVIL technological solution

“iCIVIL” is a technological solution that aims to build a centralized digital civil registry through the use of new technologies. Based on a mobile application, iCIVIL is efficient in the registration of births and other vital events. It is designed to enable the notification, declaration, registration and issuance of birth certificates and other civil registration documents. It is expected that this approach will be of interest to many African countries (CRMC5/2019/24).

### 5.3.3 The electronic birth and death registration system in Egypt

As part of its administrative reform agenda, the Government of Egypt automated public services. In doing so, it met several objectives, including making progress on the implementation of Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and the national strategy, Vision 2030. The administrative reforms included developing and implementing an electronic birth and death registration system. The lessons learned during the development of that system provide valuable insights into the challenges involved in adopting new registration technologies for African countries (CRMC5/2019/20).

## Parallel session 5.4

### 5.4.1 Assessing and strengthening medicolegal death investigation systems to improve the accuracy and completeness of vital statistics

The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 have ambitious goals to decrease the burden of deaths due to unnatural causes. Frequently referred to as unnatural deaths, they are due to external causes, which result from the following: intentional (such as self-harm and assault); unintentional (such as road traffic injuries and drowning); or undetermined intent. To capture the magnitude of this burden with complete and accurate statistics, countries must first have medicolegal death investigation systems that function well and integrate the needed information with CRVS systems. The objective of this report is to share information on business process mapping and legal analysis implementation and system strengthening support procedures (CRMC5/2019/21).

### 5.4.2 Pathways to obtaining good-quality cause-of-death information in Africa

Good-quality cause-of-death statistics are dependent on a country’s CRVS system. Such data are fundamental for evidence-based policymaking, programme planning, and monitoring many Sustainable Development Goals. In Africa, only a few countries have adopted the Medical Certification of Cause-of-Death form in more than 80 per cent of its health facilities. Those countries currently supporting full coding with ICD10 will need to formulate a pathway to transition to the newest version of ICD. The report presents alternative pathways, including open verbal autopsy (OpenVA) procedures for capturing causes-of-death for out-of-facility deaths, resources and recommendations for supporting the implementation of different tools, and transitions between pathways to improve cause-of-death statistics (CRMC5/2019/28).

### 5.4.3 Death certification curriculum and infographic tutorials for physicians

Reliable and representative cause-of-death data, segregated by age and sex, are essential to inform public health policy, respond to emerging health needs, and document progress on the



Sustainable Development Goals. This information is abstracted from medical death certificates completed by trained physicians. Only high-quality medical certificates of death are usable; information abstracted from them has a major role in policy development, in decision-making and in monitoring the national health situation and health-care outcomes. To ensure that doctors are able to competently certify deaths in accordance with ICD criteria and standards, they must receive basic training in death certification and must understand the importance of high-quality data on cause-of-death. The report shares information on the Medical Certification of Death Curriculum developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) (CRMCM5/2019/25).

#### Parallel session 5.5

5.5.1 From legal to service-oriented identity: building identity ecosystems for development

5.5.2 CRVS for better migration data

5.5.3 UN Legal Identity Agenda: fulfils the promise to leave no one behind

Sessions 5.6 to 5.8: Preparation of conclusions and recommendations for reporting to the ministerial segment

Session 5.6 – Time is allotted for the preparation of reports of each of the parallel sessions.

Session 5.7 – Report back to the plenary by rapporteurs of the parallel sessions.

Session 5.8 – Consolidation of the reports from day one and day two sessions, including conclusions and recommendations for reporting to the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration.

#### **Session 6: Interim Committee of Registrars General: updates on activities**

African countries have embarked on a notable journey to improve their CRVS systems since the first Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration in 2010. Despite remarkable progress, African CRVS systems face a number of major challenges. Among them is the lack of intergovernmental coordination, oversight and reporting mechanisms that would work with the APAI-CRVS secretariat during the interministerial conferences period and report directly to the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration. To resolve this challenge, ECA organized consultative meetings of Registrars General from representative countries. In 2017, the consultative meeting of Registrars General formed an Interim Committee to establish a subcommittee responsible for civil registration under the relevant Specialized Technical Committee of the African Union. The Interim Committee is expected to update the Registrars General and others on the activities undertaken following the Nouakchott Declaration at the fourth Conference of Ministers.

#### **Session 7: Leveraging partnerships in CRVS systems improvement initiatives**

The CRVS system requires technical support in a number of different areas. With CRVS systems improvement gaining momentum in Africa, various donors and development partners started to show renewed interest and came in with funds for specific technical aspects of CRVS. Such interventions have at times been helpful to the cause of APAI-CRVS and counter-productive at others, diverting the attention of the countries from a holistic CRVS improvement

process. The objective is to guide countries on the kinds of support available from different partners and how to leverage these opportunities for the benefit of countries' CRVS systems improvement initiatives.

### **Session 8: Conclusions and recommendations**

The report of the expert meeting, the draft conclusions and recommendations, and the ministerial statement will be discussed.

#### **Closing of the meeting**

The Chair will highlight the main outcomes of the proceedings and declare the meeting closed.

#### **Country delegates from the Experts Meeting brief their ministers**

Country experts are expected to brief their respective ministers on the outcomes of the meeting, specifically on the proposed draft conclusions and recommendations.

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