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

Parallel session

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for better Migration data[1]

Conference Theme:

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

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for better Migration data[1]

1.	Intercontinental migration in Africa has increased over the years resulting in political, economic, social, demographic and cultural impact on both the country of origin and the destinations of migrants. This can be both an opportunity and a challenge. Migration in Africa is discussed on all levels, from continental and regional over to country levels. To facilitate opportunities for migrants to contribute to society and there by combat its problematic impact, the African Union Commission adopted political strategies to govern migration. These include the *New AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa, The Plan of Action (2018-2030)* and the *Joint Labor Migration Program* (JLMP).

2.	There is a shortage of relevant information on intercontinental migration. The African Union Commission published two reports on labor migration statistics, the most recent on data gathered 2018. From the two reports, it is clear that many countries have difficulties when trying to retrieve data on migration.

3.	Hence, it is difficult for countries to estimate the stock of migrants in their country. Additionally, data on migration flows are almost non-existent in many African countries and very few African countries have data on their diaspora. Other types of migration, such as irregular migration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling is even harder to find reliable sources on. Migration data is usually derived from population and housing censuses, household surveys or employment surveys, which often include a module that is related to migration. Immigration services at the country borders normally collect information on the movement of people between countries; the use of this data for the development of migration statistics is almost absent. Mainly because the data collected at the borders does not include vital migration indicators. The fact that migration data is scarce makes monitoring and evaluation of the migration strategies impossible. Further, it is difficult for the countries of origin, transit and destination to account for the development of migration policies and regulations as well as facilitating integration between migrants and locals in the best interest of the countries.

4.	One of the tangible sources in the Government sphere that can provide quality data on migration is a civil registration system. Civil registration status is the situation of the person in the family and society through a legal administrative identification procedure. In addition, civil status refers to the public service responsible for drawing up the acts establishing these facts, in particular the birth, marriage and death certificates. A civil registration system can be used to produce data on the migrant populations in a country, however at least two conditions must be met: migrants need to be included in the system and it must be possible to identify migrants in the registers, typically from information about country of birth/citizenship. Many African countries have already established CR systems where parts of the population are registered. These registers represent interesting opportunities as potential sources for data on the migrant population.

5.	Since 2010, the African Union Commission in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa have started to support African countries to improve the civil registration system. A program was developed

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[1] *This event is a cooperation between African Union Commission and Statistics Sweden.*

to create a continental framework to strengthen the capacities of African countries: Program for the Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS).

6.   Improving civil registration systems is imperative for improving migration statistics in a way that is useful for policy making in developing societies. The present side event is discussing how this can be realized and how data on migration can benefit the development on economy and society.

Expected results

7.   The expected results of this side event are to:

(a)   Give examples of good practices in the use of vital statistics for the improvement of migration statistics;

(b)   Identify the difficulties encountered by migrants in registering in civil status registers;

(c)   Give examples of good practices on the establishment of a national framework between national vital statistics agencies and national statistical offices for the improvement of vital statistics.

Issues for discussion

(a)   To what extent is vital statistics used as a foundation for the improvement of migration statistics and policies in different countries within and outside of the African continent?

1.   Where statistics is used, how can high quality statistics be used as a basis for policy?

2.   Where statistics is used, what gaps in statistics have you noticed? Give examples on how better policy decisions or actions if those gaps were filled.

(b)   What are the challenges that migrants might face in registering on civil status registers?

(c)   What are the incensements and/or challenges for registering a newborn or a dead relative in to civil registration systems?

(d)   How can a national framework between national vital statistics agencies and national statistical offices for the improvement of vital statistics be established?

(e)   How can civil registers in Africa include also migrants in their systems?

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