The Third Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration

YAMOUSSOUKRO DECLARATION

Preamble:

We, African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration, meeting at our Third Conference on 12 and 13 February 2015, in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, on the theme, "Promoting the Use of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Support of Good Governance in Africa"

1. ***Recalling*** the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, being the founding principles of an individual's right to an identity; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 7 (1); and the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, particularly Article 6 (2) that states "The child shall be registered immediately after birth";

2. ***Taking note*** of the report of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health (COIA) "*Keeping Promises, Measuring Results*", being mindful of its first recommendation which states that "By 2015, all countries should have taken significant steps to establish a system for registration of births, deaths and causes of death, and have well-functioning health information systems that combine data from facilities, administrative sources and surveys;"

3. ***Commending*** the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) on the launch of the General Comment No. 2on Article 6 of the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

4. ***Recognising*** that the implementation of Agenda 2063 will require comprehensive, accurate and timely statistics generated from civil registration systems;

5. ***Recognising*** the participation and voice of African youth in promoting the development of CRVS;

6. ***Conscious*** of the progress and achievements made by many member states in the implementation of the resolutions of the past two conferences, particularly in conducting their comprehensive assessments as a basis for developing action plans for improvement of their CRVS systems;

7. ***Recognising*** that the Ebola epidemic and terrorism have shown the need of vital events and real time cause-of-death information, is no longer optional but critical;

8. ***Acknowledging*** the importance of civil registration and vital statistics in addressing the post 2015 development agenda on inclusive and sustainable development and Agenda 2063 which calls for a united, prosperous and peaceful Africa;

9. ***Realising*** the centrality of civil registration based vital statistics in providing data to inform health, economic and social policies, for good governance and accountability, and in advancing the data revolution;

10. ***Associating*** with the Seoul Statement of September 2014 from the First International Identity Management Conference, ***underscoring*** the centrality of civil registration for establishment of robust identification management systems, ***facilitating*** citizens access to social services, cross border movement and as key tools in disaster management and response;

11. ***Appreciating*** the progress made in the implementation of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS), and attentive to the fact that this year marks the end of the 2010-2015 medium-term plan;

12. ***Recognising*** the efforts of the African CRVS Core Group in the provision of both technical and operational support in the comprehensive assessment activities and the development of improvement plans;

13. ***Taking into account*** the guidelines and tools for CRVS assessment and planning developed by the APAI-CRVS core group, the newly revised United Nations Principles and Recommendations for vital statistics, as well as the focus given by the African Symposium for Statistical Development (ASSD) to advance the African CRVS agenda;

14. ***Taking note*** of the innovative management and leadership approaches employed in the running of the CRVS through the core group mechanism but also note the impending capacity risks;

15. ***Recognising*** that CRVS has the potential to provide information on people, places and movements and development options, and hence the necessity to embed location and addresses in CRVS systems;

16. ***Acknowledging*** the contribution of continental organizations, international development partners as well as the role of the private sector and Non-Government Organizations in improving civil registration and vital statistics;

17. ***Aware*** of the importance of the Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) *Scaling Up Investment Plan 2015 -2024*, with the goal of universal registration of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and other vital events, including reporting cause of death;

18. ***Appreciating*** the increased and continuing involvement of the African Ministers of Health in improving registration of births and deaths, including the collection of information on cause-of-death;

19. ***Underscoring*** the important role of the health sector in the delivery of civil registration services to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach in addressing the challenges of

improving CRVS systems in Africa;

20. *Cognisant* that a number of African countries are in or emerging out of conflict situations, or have special circumstances and would need technical support;

21. *Recognising* the pervasive nature of information technology in CRVS applications and its strategic implications for the economy of Africa, and the role of young people in the modernisation and improvement of CRVS;

22. *Recognising* that a complete and well-functioning civil registration system is a fundamental necessity for the sovereignty of nations

23. *Building* on the resolutions of the first and second conferences of African Ministers responsible for civil registration and noting Africa's contribution in the development of the global agenda on CRVS.

24. Hereby resolve to:

A. Capacity building

    a. Implement a clear strategy on sustainable capacity development on CRVS in the continent, including through intra-Africa cooperation arrangements;

    b. Forge purposeful partnerships with technical institutions of higher learning in order to appropriate substantive and technological benefits nationally and continentally;

    c. Call upon WHO, in collaboration with Pan African Organizations and other partners, to intensify their efforts in developing real time death registration and causes of death information at systems at country level;

B. Rights

    d. Pursue actively the ideal of " leaving no country behind" and "leaving no one out" especially the vulnerable including the refugees, Internally Displaced Person (IDP) and stateless people as well as implement the General Comment on Article 6 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

    e. Support the development of guidelines and recommendations for maintaining and managing CRVS in conflict and emergency situations as well as special circumstances by making use of experiences from countries having gone through these situations;.

    f. Request the Secretariat to develop guidelines to support countries in mainstreaming gender issues in CRVS systems;

C. Financing

g. Commit that we will take up the responsibility for financing and sustaining our national CRVS plans and, when necessary, mobilize resources to cover the financing gap;

h. Call on Pan African organizations (AUC, ECA, AfDB) to set-up a financing mechanism for APAI-CRVS;

i. Call for partners, to support the implementation of the APAI-CRVS strategy in line with Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;

j. Endorse the renewal of the five-year medium term plan to the 2016-2020;

D. Technology

k. Adopt a sustainable development stance for civil registration and interrelated systems by using appropriate information and communication technology that meet the legal, administrative and statistical functions of civil registration;

E. Service delivery

l. Establish strong working arrangements with health and other relevant sectors to improve registration service delivery at the most appropriate administrative level;

m. Establish solid linkages between civil registration and national identity systems in efforts to manage one legal identity and to improve governance and service delivery;

F. Implement evidence-based policies

n. Analyse and disseminate statistics from civil registration regardless of the level of completeness as a means to establish the state of the system and its development;

o. Establish appropriate national residential address infrastructure in order to optimise the utility of CRVS systems;

G. Positioning Africa's contribution to the global agenda

p. Share the APAI-CRVS experience globally, in international fora, to influence innovation;

H. Strengthening coordination capabilities

q. Fast track strengthening of the capacity of the Secretariat as a matter of economic and political necessity, ensuring that the required human and financial resources are made available to enable it to carry out its routine functions in implementation of APAI-CRVS and meet the ever increasing demand for technical support from the countries;

I. Advocacy for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)

    r. Recommend that the Heads of State and Government declare 2015-2024 as the decade for repositioning CRVS in Africa's continental, regional and national development agenda and urge governments to respond with appropriate action.

    s. Recommend the establishment of one day of a year to be a Civil registration day

J. CRVS, Post 2015 development agenda and Data Revolution

    t. Invite the Secretary General of the United Nations to address the 46th session of the United Nations statistics Commission to share on the developments of CRVS in the African region in the context of the post 2015 development agenda generally and data revolution specifically

We express our profound gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for accepting to host the 4th Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration in 2016.

Done in Yamoussoukro

On 13/02/2015