

Fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration

Nouakchott Declaration

The Fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and Ministers of Health held in Nouakchott from 7 to 8 December 2017, on the theme, “Accelerating a coordinated improvement of civil registration and vital statistics for implementation and monitoring of the development agenda in Africa: Review of progress and the way forward.”

Preamble

1. *Expressing* the strong commitment on the institutionalization of the Conference of African Ministers as a standing forum of the African Union Commission as approved during the nineteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in July 2012,
2. *Considering* the fact that, in July 2016, the Heads of State and Government declared 2017-2026 to be the “Decade for repositioning civil registration and vital statistics in Africa’s continental, regional and national development agendas”,
3. *Recognizing* the role of the Africa Programme for Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) secretariat as one of the mechanisms for promoting systematic and coordinated approaches and partnerships at the regional level in the implementation of improvement initiatives concerning civil registration and vital statistics in the continent,
4. *Recognizing* the contribution of the Regional Core Group in supporting civil registration and vital statistics activities in the continent,
5. *Acknowledging* the efforts to support the African Union member States in conducting comprehensive assessments of civil registration and vital statistics systems and the development of strategic improvement plans and business mapping,
6. *Recognizing* the improvement in statistical methods relating to death registration and mortality through strategies for strengthening vital statistics in national civil registration and vital statistics plans, with a focus on mortality and cause of death statistics, which are urgently needed to inform public health decision-making and monitor progress towards national and international health goals,
7. *Welcoming* the entry into force of the digitization of civil registration and vital statistics systems, which brings the potential to provide transformative improvements in such systems, based on its ability to extend registration coverage, standardize and streamline relevant processes, integrate data from multiple systems, and securely store data at scale — all in a cost-effective way,

8. *Noting* with satisfaction the entry into force of the production of vital statistics by some African Union member States from civil registration records,
9. *Recalling* all the recommendations of previous Ministerial Conferences, including the framework to “develop results-based monitoring and evaluation systems and tools to monitor and report on progress on civil registration and vital statistics”,
10. *Recognizing* that the analysis of the business processes of the civil registration and vital statistics systems is a means of improving them, in order to have comparable and relevant vital statistics in Africa,
11. *Appreciating* the increased and continuing involvement of African Ministers of Health in improving the processes relating to the registration of births and deaths, including the collection of information on cause of death,
12. *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 civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa and achieving universal registration of vital events,
13. *Building on* the resolutions and declarations of all previous Conferences of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and *noting* Africa’s contribution to the development of the global agenda on civil registration and vital statistics,

The Conference,

1. *Reaffirms* the commitment of African Union member States in addressing civil registration and vital statistics issues within the context of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paying particular attention to the demographic dividend and population movement, and *supports* the development of guidelines and recommendations in the use of civil registration and vital statistics for harnessing developmental potentials;
2. *Reiterates* the obligation of African Union member States to improve mortality statistics and the recording of causes of death and the linkages between the health sector and civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa, and *requests* the Ministries of Health to collaborate closely with ministries responsible for civil registration and vital statistics systems, with a view to promoting the reliability of health statistics;
3. *Welcomes* the outcome of the APAI-CRVS monitoring exercise, as indicated in the report on the status of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa;
4. *Requests* that the APAI-CRVS systems strategic plan for the period 2017-2021 is implemented with appropriate support from African Union member States and partners;
5. *Reaffirms* the need for a subcommittee responsible for civil registration and vital statistics under the relevant Specialized Technical Committee of the African Union, in accordance with the existing Rules and Regulations;

6. *Encourages* the African Union Commission to identify best practices within or outside the continent in order to improve the civil registration and vital statistics processes and methods and to share them among African Union member States and the regional economic communities;
7. *Requests* the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and partners, including the Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank, to make necessary arrangements for the organization of the workshop entitled, “African Union Building Capacity Workshop on CRVS” in 2018 in Nouakchott;
8. *Requests* the African Union member States to implement the decision to allocate 0.15% of the national budget to promote effective statistical systems in Africa, including civil registration and vital statistics systems;
9. *Requests* the African Union to engage in and commit resources to capacity-building of the functional areas relevant to civil registration and vital statistics within the Department of Economic Affairs of the African Union Commission;
10. *Encourages* the Economic Commission for Africa to improve the staffing of the secretariat of the Africa Programme for the Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) in order to enhance its technical capacity;
11. *Calls upon* African Union member States and all African development partners, including the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, to build the institutional capacity of all African actors involved in civil registration and vital statistics systems;
12. *Encourages* the Economic Commission for Africa, as the secretariat of the APAI-CRVS, to enhance research and development efforts, which foster methodologies that improve the processes pertaining to civil registration and vital statistics among African Union member States;
13. *Requests* the African Development Bank to lead the resource mobilization efforts to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems;
14. *Invites* African Union member States to put in place appropriate legal frameworks to promote civil registration and vital statistics systems through the involvement of all stakeholders;
15. *Encourages* the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa, with the aim of enhancing their oversight role, to coordinate and harmonize the actions of various partners;
16. *Invites* African Union member States to put in place an environment conducive to the involvement of all stakeholders in the promotion of civil registration and vital statistics systems;
17. *Encourages* African Union member States to develop shared information and communication technology assets in support of effective civil registration and vital statistics systems for the continent, which are built to common standards and are

interoperable with other governmental systems, such as health and identity management;

18. *Recommends* that August 10 should be declared Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, and *calls upon* African Union member States to observe the day;
19. *Encourages* the Economic Commission for Africa, as the secretariat of APAI-CRVS, to lead the development of common information communication technology assets to support effective civil registration and vital statistics systems across Africa, ensuring the highest standards of data protection and confidentiality of personal data, in order to promote interoperability among civil registration, health and identity management systems, and having the flexibility to meet the needs of all African countries;
20. *Encourages* member States to include refugees, internally displaced persons and persons at risk of statelessness in civil registration and vital statistics systems and factor them into improvement strategies and scaling-up plans;
21. *Accepts* the proposal made by the Republic of Zambia to host the fifth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Lusaka;
22. *Expresses* its gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for its warm hospitality and the successful organization of the Fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.
