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Everyone visible in Africa



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

## **Media advisory on Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day**

10 August 2022

### **Harnessing coordination, country leadership and ownership to strengthen integrated civil registration and vital statistics systems: a vehicle for #CountingEveryone**

The fifth Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day will be commemorated on 10 August 2022, during the twelfth year since the establishment of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, a continental framework designed to provide coordinated and integrated support to African countries in strengthening their civil registration and vital statistics systems.

Commendation is due to the visionary leaders who attended the first Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, which was held in Addis Ababa in 2010 and led to the establishment of the Africa Programme. On that occasion, African ministers identified the lack of coordinated leadership at the regional and national levels as one of the bottlenecks that was constraining the development of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa. In response, one of the guiding principles set for the Africa Programme was to promote country ownership and leadership of such systems.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day was proclaimed as 10 August by the Executive Council of the African Union at its thirty-second ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 25 and 26 January 2018, as a vehicle to enhance advocacy on the importance of civil registration and vital statistics systems for the continent's growth. It is an occasion to voice support for national and regional commitments to strengthen such systems and to increase stakeholder coordination to maximize available resources in that area. In addition, it is the day when African countries reaffirm their commitment to taking leadership and ownership in strengthening their civil registration and vital statistics systems.

The past two years have been a tragic reminder of the challenges countries face in accurately counting the lives lost during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic brought into sharp focus the importance of having timely and reliable vital events data, and the critical role that civil registration and vital statistics systems play in ensuring that everyone is counted for inclusive access to vaccination, health care, social protection and other government services.

The 2022 commemoration will be held under the theme "Harnessing coordination, country leadership and ownership to strengthen integrated civil registration and vital statistics systems: a vehicle for #CountingEveryone". The theme highlights the need for a sustained



political commitment at the country level, with African Governments taking leadership and ownership in strengthening their respective civil registration and vital statistics systems.

The theme was inspired by the need to provide leadership in transforming civil registration systems. Change management is necessary because civil registration offices cannot continue to do business as usual, relying on slow, passive, reactive systems that depend on in-person participation. African countries must build systems that are dynamic, interoperable, resilient, proactive and agile. It is also imperative that they invest substantial public resources in the transformation of their systems to make them more technically and financially accessible to the population and, in doing so, minimize the perceived scandal of invisibility on the continent.

The theme also highlights the need for everyone to be visible in Africa, as envisaged in the costed strategic plan of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for the period 2017–2021. Civil registration and vital statistics systems confer legal identity to individuals and inform good governance, protecting human rights and creating inclusive societies. Civil registration increases the credibility of national and local governments, enhancing their capacity to deliver social services by helping to identify which services are needed, where and by whom. Millions of people around the globe, however, live without the rights, protections and benefits afforded by having a legal identity and die without having had any proof of existence.

Well-coordinated civil registration and vital statistics systems benefit every individual while simultaneously informing public policy. Leadership, along with advances in systems thinking, demographic analysis and digital technologies, are key pillars for improving these systems, which are at the foundation of the digital public infrastructure that many countries are putting into place.

On Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, 10 August 2022, leaders in Governments across Africa are encouraged to:

(a) Establish or maintain inter-agency coordination committees that regularly convene all relevant stakeholders in the civil registration and vital statistics system and the identification system to strengthen and promote such systems and the use of their data across government services;

(b) Establish linkages between civil registration and vital statistics systems and other systems, such as identification management, health and social protection systems, which are critical entry points for civil registration and vital statistics, as the linkages can also contribute to increasing demand for civil registration and vital statistics if integrated systems are put in place or could create a separate entry point;

(c) Advance the digitization of civil registration data as part of the critical digital public infrastructure to promote the interlinkage and use of civil registration and vital statistics data and identification data across government agencies;

(d) Strengthen the legal and regulatory framework governing the civil registration and vital statistics systems and identification systems to ensure inclusivity and universality, to promote greater intergovernmental collaboration and to facilitate the use of civil registration and vital statistics data across the various government sectors;

(e) Increase the availability of timely and policy-relevant civil registration and vital statistics data, including on causes of death, for use in the improvement of government-wide policymaking and service delivery, including of health and social protection services;

(f) Raise community awareness on the importance of registering vital events and how registration benefits families, communities and countries, and engage communities to increase the demand for registration for every vital event.

The sixth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration will be held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 28 October 2022. Accordingly, the leadership roles of the ministers should be affirmed to ensure the political commitment of their Governments at the highest levels. This will play an essential role in guaranteeing that relevant government stakeholders effectively take on their roles and responsibilities, and unify around a single comprehensive multisectoral national civil registration and vital statistics strategy. It is imperative that all levels of government are engaged in the process of establishing political commitment and developing a comprehensive multisectoral national civil registration and vital statistics strategy.

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