



**African Development Bank**



**United Nations**



**African Union  
Commission**



**Federal Democratic  
Republic of Ethiopia**

First Conference of African Ministers Responsible for  
Civil Registration

UN Conference Centre  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

13 – 14 August 2010

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## **Declaration of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration**

### **Improving Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa**



1. We, African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 13 to 14 August 2010, for the first ever conference organized on this subject, being convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC);

2. Acknowledge that the theme of our first conference: *“Improved Civil Status Information for Efficient Public Administration and Generation of Vital Statistics for National Development and MDGs Monitoring in Africa”* is both timely and relevant for the achievement of Africa’s development and improvement of public service delivery to our people;

3. Are convinced of the importance of civil registration for public policy, good governance, human rights, rights of children, and as a basis for reliable vital statistics;

4. Further acknowledge the importance and contribution of civil registration and vital statistics information for the implementation of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa and the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics and promoting the African Charter on Statistics;

5. However note with concern that despite the importance of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems and ongoing efforts to improve them, the majority of our countries still lack adequate, viable and complete systems;

6. Affirm the need for strong policy responses, including those aimed at improving CRVS systems as part of the ongoing reforms in our countries;

7. Take note of the recommendations of the 2009 Tanzania Regional Workshop on Strengthening CRVS Systems in Africa, the second session of the Statistical Commission for Africa, and the Addis Ababa Expert Group Meeting on Civil Registration, preceding this conference, to strengthen CRVS systems in Africa;

8. Note that the challenge before us now is to continue mobilizing and rallying political commitment and leadership for the improvement of CRVS systems in Africa. In this regard, we fully endorse the recommendations of our experts on strategies for strengthening CRVS systems. In the light of these recommendations, we hereby resolve to:

8.1 Take appropriate policy measures to facilitate the implementation of plans, programmes and initiatives for the reform and improvement of CRVS systems to achieve universal coverage and completeness, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of our countries. In this regard, we resolve to mainstream CRVS processes into national statistical development strategies and other national plans and programmes, including strengthening coordination of activities among various players at national, subregional and regional levels;

- 8.2 Formulate laws and policies that ensure timely and compulsory registration of vital events occurring within our countries, with guarantees for equal access to the system for all persons. In this regard, we commit to revise and update our CRVS laws and statistical legislation in line with international and regional guidelines and recommendations, and to allocate adequate human and financial resources for this purpose;
  - 8.3 Intensify awareness-raising campaigns on the procedures and importance of CRVS systems, to ensure their effective functioning.
9. We recognize the importance of partnerships and capacity-building to support national efforts to strengthen CRVS. In this regard, we call upon:
- 9.1 ECA, AfDB and AUC, as well as other development partners, to continue to support our efforts in capacity-building and mobilizing resources;
  - 9.2 ECA, AfDB and AUC to undertake an evaluation of national CRVS systems and finalize the draft medium-term regional plan and guidelines and report to the next session of the Conference of Ministers;
  - 9.3 The Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD), which has hitherto focused on mobilizing Africa to fully participate in the 2010 round of population and housing census, to give priority to mobilizing Africa to improve CRVS systems;
  - 9.4 ECA to consider establishing a substantive post on civil registration and vital statistics with appropriate support staff at the African Centre for Statistics to ensure the sustainability of ongoing efforts to improve CRVS systems in Africa;
  - 9.5 Universities, national and regional statistical and demographic training institutions to develop or enhance appropriate curricula aimed at building capacity on CRVS systems in Africa;
  - 9.6 The health sector to align the health system with CRVS systems to improve coordination and sharing of data on births and deaths with assigned causes for all deaths, with national statistical offices and CRVS authorities;
  - 9.7 The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Health Metrics Network (HMN) and other development partners to strengthen their support to regional and national CRVS initiatives and programmes, including aligning their assistance accordingly.
10. Lastly, we request the AUC to consider institutionalizing the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics as a standing regional platform to meet biannually, for discussion and evaluation of political and policy issues related to civil registration and vital statistics in Africa.

11. We thank the Government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for hosting this successful Conference. We especially thank the Honourable Minister of Justice, His Excellency Mr. Berhan Hailu for his leadership in this endeavour to improve CRVS systems in Africa. We are particularly grateful to ECA, AfDB, AUC, the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), UNSD, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), HMN, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for successfully organizing this important Conference.

Done in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of August 2010.