Welcome to this new online publication, the Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Newslet ter, which aims to inform and educate the CRVS community and other stakeholders about the work which the Africa Programme for Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) is under taking in the African region.

The APAI-CRVS secretariat has identified the need to establish a media platform on which stakeholders involved in CRVS work in Africa can share information. We recognize that countries are doing a lot to improve and strengthen their civil registration systems, but these best practices are seldom shared with other countries. As part of our South-South initiative, this newsletter will provide a medium through which we can learn from each other. Knowledge-sharing is a fundamental principle of success.

The newsletter will give member States opportunities to tell their stories. We look forward to your contributions. We will feature upcoming events such as meetings, conferences, workshops and training. We will inform you about new tools and resources that are developed by CRVS experts and can be used in improving CRVS systems.

We will feature countries’ best practices with the aim of influencing others to adopt such initiatives. Thus, the newsletter will enable us to tell our own stories.

Since the inception of APAI-CRVS with its “Everyone Must Count” vision, many successes have been achieved. The ministerial conferences that define the strategic directions of CRVS in Africa have been held consistently every two years since 2009, and the sixth is being planned. Over 40 countries in Africa have undertaken comprehensive assessments that have contributed significantly to strengthening their civil registration and vital statistics systems.

Through partnerships with other development partners, funding has been provided to increase the operational capacity of APAI-CRVS and enable the delivery of technical assistance and advisory services to member States.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the African member States that have supported the Programme and provided leadership in its implementation over the past 10 years. We are grateful to the Africa Core Group members, who have remained dedicated to improving CRVS systems in Africa. We also thank the development partners that have provided human resources, tools, financing, and technological, material and other support.

I also want to applaud the secretariat, which has kept APAI-CRVS going despite the challenges of limited resources. As we continue to implement the programme for the next 10 years, we look forward to continued collaboration with our partners and we welcome new ones.

The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis, and our editorial team will welcome your articles. We wish you happy reading.

William Muhwava
Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Section
African Centre for Statistics
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
**Upcoming**

**Upcoming events, activities and resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upcoming events</th>
<th>Upcoming activities</th>
<th>Upcoming resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Country missions for the implementation of the CRVS mentorship programme</td>
<td>1. Additional countries for the mentorship programme</td>
<td>1. E-learning module on the CRVS Business Process Improvement Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Comprehensive assessment activities for Malawi and Zimbabwe</td>
<td>3. Paper on protection of personal privacy and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Evaluation of the APAI- CRVS programme</td>
<td>4. ECA study on the impact of COVID-19 on civil registration systems: case studies from Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Paper on refugee management and CRVS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Paper on data standards for CRVS systems (written by Vital Strategies)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
News and events

Expert general meeting of African registrar generals

Fourth Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, 10 August 2021

On 9 August 2021, ECA hosted an online meeting of African experts in CRVS. Participants discussed the fourth annual commemoration of Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, held on 10 August under the theme “Leadership for an essential service: building resilient civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa post COVID-19 through innovative, integrated and decentralized services”.

At the meeting, the Director of the African Centre for Statistics, Oliver Chinganya, noted that “The aim of this day is to increase public awareness on the importance of the timely registration of vital events (see: https://www.uneca.org/stories/crvs-systems-fragilized-by-covid-19-across-africa%2C-says-eca%E2%80%99s-chinganya).

See page 9 to read about the celebration of Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day in various countries.
In recent years, countries across Africa have accelerated their CRVS programmes and shown tremendous leadership in providing civil registration services to all by strengthening their legal and governance structures. The Economic Commission for Africa, the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems, and Vital Strategies share stories of inspirational CRVS leaders from across Africa who are leading transformation in CRVS, from a leadership perspective.

What inspires CRVS leaders in Africa? What are their visions? What are the key determining factors for developing successful CRVS systems in their countries?

Discover their stories here: https://crvssystems.ca/leaders.
The country implementation of the United Nations legal identity agenda was launched in Ethiopia from 10 to 21 May 2021. Ethiopia became the thirteenth country to roll-out the project in Africa, aiming to reach target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, “legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030”.

Initial activities included a rapid assessment of the country’s readiness to implement the project, which provided a snapshot of the status of civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems in the country. Staff members from the Africa Centre for Statistics engaged stakeholders from United Nations entities, the identity management team of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency (the agency responsible for civil registration and vital statistics in Ethiopia), the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, and the Ministry of Health.

Efforts are underway to organize further deliberations with the Central Statistics Agency and the Ministry of Peace on their role in ensuring legal identity for all.

Death Registration in Africa

“Measuring Africa’s data gap: The cost of not counting the dead” is a BBC investigation into the inadequacy of death registration systems in Africa.


Ethiopia

The country implementation of the United Nations legal identity agenda was launched in Ethiopia from 10 to 21 May 2021. Ethiopia became the thirteenth country to roll-out the project in Africa, aiming to reach target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, “legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030”.

Initial activities included a rapid assessment of the country’s readiness to implement the project, which provided a snapshot of the status of civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems in the country. Staff members from the Africa Centre for Statistics engaged stakeholders from United Nations entities, the identity management team of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency (the agency responsible for civil registration and vital statistics in Ethiopia), the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, and the Ministry of Health.

Efforts are underway to organize further deliberations with the Central Statistics Agency and the Ministry of Peace on their role in ensuring legal identity for all.
ECA has continued to identify countries that are making great strides in establishing integrated civil registration and identity management systems. Despite several false starts in the past, the Government of Kenya has finally established a national integrated identity management system. It is envisioned that henceforth, it will be the national population database from which the national population register will be generated in real time.

The civil registration system is the foundational system that will populate the database. The data of individuals from various vital events in their life cycle will be linked through their unique identifier number, which will also be used to generate identity documents such as ID and passports. In May, the Chief of the Demographics and Social Statistics Section led in-country partners in high-level talks with the Government. Together with the Kenya Country Representative of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), he held deliberations with both the Cabinet Secretary and the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. Among the issues discussed was the role the country is playing as a centre of learning for countries that are willing to integrate their identity management systems. The discussions resulted in agreement on three areas of focus for collaboration between the United Nations and the Government of Kenya, including raising awareness, building the capacity of relevant departments and supporting the legal review of laws and policies.

Senegal

The Government of Senegal has begun the process of developing a national strategic plan for improving civil registration and vital statistics. It plans to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of CRVS to gain a better understanding of the corresponding systems. This assessment will form the basis for strategic planning to establish a system that is effective, sustainable and secure.

Lesotho

The practice of dualism in Lesotho's legal system has an effect on CRVS and human rights. Commenting on the dual justice system during a CRVS comprehensive assessment workshop in September 2019, the registrar of the Maseru Local Court indicated that they were sometimes confused and that judges must use common sense when administering justice. This article, “The practice of dualism in Lesotho’s legal system: the Effect on CRVS and human rights”, highlights how dual legal frameworks can impact CRVS.

Burkina Faso

The reality of CRVS in Burkina Faso was the subject of debates that were held as part of the first-ever “24 hours of demography” on 22 July 2021. Highlights of those discussions are featured in the article « Démographie et enregistrement de faits d’état civil : un enjeu majeur de développement pour le Burkina » (Demography and civil status registration: a major development issue for Burkina Faso), available at https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article106353.
CRVS development activities

**CRVS Systems Improvement Framework**

The CRVS Systems Improvement Framework was developed in collaboration with ECA, Vital Strategies and the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems. It includes a package of materials developed to support countries in the end-to-end process of strengthening their CRVS systems using an agile approach.

The new framework includes all the elements of a comprehensive assessment and also incorporates a process-centric and iterative approach to assessing, planning, implementing, and monitoring CRVS improvements.

This resource is currently available in English and French. The Portuguese version is still in development.


**CRVS country profile mapping**

**In collaboration with the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems.**

CRVS country profiles have been developed for the following 32 countries: Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

These were created in accordance with recommendation 23 (e) requesting ECA and the Centre of Excellence to regularly update the online snapshots of CRVS documents in collaboration with respective countries, to keep pace with the changing CRVS landscape and scale up to cover all member States.

See: [https://crvssystems.ca/country-profiles](https://crvssystems.ca/country-profiles).

**COVID-19 response**


Given the unprecedented current global health crisis due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has had an impact on civil registration services, it was imperative that measures be developed to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the registration of vital events. ECA is using its convening role to provide technical assistance to countries to ensure that their civil registration operations can be maintained and adjusted to respond to challenges during the pandemic. This support will continue to play a crucial role in programming during the pandemic and the post-pandemic period.

ECA has carried out an assessment of all African countries to determine the impact of COVID-19 on civil registration systems and how it has been mitigated across different countries, and also to impress on Governments that civil registration is an essential service.
Initiatives to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on CRVS systems include:

a) Countries have been provided with recommendations for civil registration authorities to ensure operational continuity during the pandemic and allow for the continued production of comprehensive vital statistics.

b) Series of webinars have been held on several topics, for example the impact of COVID-19 on civil registration operations, sharing country experiences on the impact of COVID-19 on CRVS systems, and country reports on planning for the future.

c) Webinar series have been held on enhancing death registration systems using rapid mortality surveillance systems.

ECA and its partners have developed technical briefs on innovative or good-practice approaches to facilitate the continuous and universal registration of vital events in Africa and consequently mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the performance of civil registration systems, including the generation of data for health surveillance during a health crisis, with the aim of providing inspiration and policy guidance for CRVS programming in Africa amid a global health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The technical briefs are on the following themes:

a) Analysis of the responses of African Governments to COVID-19 and their impact on the performance of CRVS systems;

b) Documenting the role of civil registration systems in the delivery of emergency cash grants, using work done in Namibia as an example of good practices;

c) Documenting the role of notification systems in capturing vital data about births and deaths for health surveillance during a health crisis;

d) Individual country briefs on Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania;

e) Documenting good practices in national and ministerial continuity plans, including in relation to CRVS systems from the Birth and Death Registry of Ghana.

A study was carried out on the impact of COVID-19 on the registration of vital events and the operations of civil registration offices in Africa. The study:

a) Assesses and quantifies the impact of COVID-19 on the registration rates of vital events, mainly births and deaths;

b) Identifies case studies from countries with reliable registration rates;

c) Establishes the negative effects of COVID-19, lessons learned and good practices in the respective countries;

d) Proposes actions for clearing the backlog and catching up in the registration of vital events.
Capacity and institutional strengthening for CRVS registrar generals and senior managers

ECA and its partners have embarked on several initiatives aimed at capacity and institutional strengthening for CRVS registrar generals and senior managers in Africa.

These include:

a) Establishing common platforms (i.e. WhatsApp group and mailing lists) to share information in real time and improve communication among the APAI-CRVS secretariat, the registrar generals and all other CRVS practitioners across Africa and within the CRVS Africa Core Group;

b) Continuously organizing and facilitating webinars on the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the travel limitations.

Some notable webinars have been:

- A meeting of Permanent Secretaries responsible for civil registration and registrar generals
- A leadership and resource-mobilization webinar for CRVS Registrar Generals and senior managers in Africa
- A workshop for registrar generals from 31 African countries, with a total of 190 participants (36 per cent of whom were women and 40 per cent of whom were French- or Portuguese-speaking).

Strengthening country capacity for improving the quality of mortality statistics in the context of COVID-19

To improve the availability and quality of morbidity and mortality data in the African region, the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Africa has provided technical support and training for the implementation of processes and the roll-out of tools for use in the conduct of verbal autopsy, the medical certification of cause of death, and morbidity and mortality coding using the eleventh revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), with the expectation that participants would eventually become trainers in their respective countries.

The training was conducted online using the Zoom meeting platform. Two sessions were run: from 2 to 4 and from 9 to 11 November 2020. Countries were put into groups largely based on language. Each session had two training groups running in parallel: one for English-speaking countries and the other for French- and Portuguese-speaking countries. Simultaneous interpretation was provided in all three languages. Breakout sessions for group work were organized by country.
Regional consultation

Regional consultation has taken place on strategies and processes for institutionalizing ICD-compliant medical certification of causes of death, community reporting of deaths, verbal autopsy, and rapid mortality surveillance.

As a follow-up to the training provided in November 2020, WHO Regional Office for Africa and its partners convened two workshops for technical staff in leading and supporting improvements in CRVS.

The February 2021 consultation brought together senior management, directors and registrar generals to follow-up on the technical training with a view to determining country CRVS improvement road maps for implementation. The specific objectives of the consultation were to:

- Build common understanding of the tools, strategies and processes for strengthening death registration systems;
- Initiate the development of a practical road map for country-level implementation and roll-out of standard ICD-compliant death reporting, medical certification and verbal autopsy;
- Build common understanding about sustainable and harmonized systems, including strengthening linkages between the health sector and civil registration in death reporting, medical certification of cause of death and verbal autopsy;
- Initiate mentorship, cross-country learning and knowledge-sharing of experiences in strengthening death registration systems.

This was an online workshop via Zoom, organized in a series of webinars. The first was held on 9 February for English-speaking countries and 10 February for French- and Portuguese-speaking countries, followed by a one-week breakout period; and the second webinar was held on 16 February for English-speaking countries and 17 February for French- and Portuguese-speaking countries. There were two sessions each day, morning and afternoon, each lasting two hours.

Participants were invited from all 47 countries covered by WHO Regional Office for Africa. Each country was entitled to send five participants representing senior officers from the Ministry of Health, the Civil Registration Office, and the National Statistics Office, to ensure representation from the multiple agencies involved in CRVS.

Fifteen countries have developed action plans and others are continuing to work with ECA and WHO teams to consolidate their plans.

Country mentorship programme

ECA and Vital Strategies have developed a CRVS country-mentorship programme, under which eight countries - (Angola, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda and Zimbabwe) - are being assisted by a mentor to support CRVS initiatives. The programme is based on a recent review of CRVS systems which
identified the need to streamline key CRVS processes to facilitate changes in process accountability and resourcing.

The programme aims to improve death registration and the cause of death process in countries. The country mentors:

- Support the relevant stakeholders in implementing the CRVS systems improvement framework for death registration and causes of death;
- Support business improvement work with key government agencies, major institutional stakeholders, clients and CRVS professionals to assess, analyze and redesign CRVS business processes by using business process maps and other tools;
- Support the alignment of death registration and cause-of-death certification processes with international standards, concepts and best practices.

**APAI-CRVS Core Group**

Through the CRVS Core Group, several CRVS initiatives are being supported by Core Group members, and these have been instrumental in strengthening the various CRVS initiatives on the continent. The Core Group meets on a monthly basis to discuss the initiatives and programmes that are being supported by partners.

Some of the ongoing initiatives, collaboration and activities involving partners include:

**a) World Bank Global Financing Facility**

There has been considerable interest in the CRVS work of the Global Financing Facility (GFF) from Governments, and opportunities to expand it are significant.

New investments by partners during the replenishment will support the scaling up of CRVS across existing and new countries under the Facility, including the establishment of innovative ways to accelerate birth, death and marriage registration. The Global Financing Facility is currently supporting Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Liberia and the United Republic of Tanzania.

**b) Vital Strategies**

Vital Strategies has been working to finalize the online training module for the CRVS Improvement Framework. It has supported training on the Rapid Mortality Surveillance System, which has been adopted by Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda to provide information on COVID-19 deaths. Vital Strategies is currently supporting the country mentorship programme on death registration, which is being implemented in Angola, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

**c) WHO and ECA**

As a member of the CRVS Core Group, the ECA team has supported and participated in the capacity-building workshop on the policy, strategy, and process of institutionalizing ICD-compliant medical certification of cause of death and verbal autopsy, and also the regional consultation on strategies and processes for institutionalizing ICD-compliant medical certification of cause of death, community reporting of deaths, verbal autopsy, and rapid mortality surveillance.
The team also undertook a joint country mission to Guinea-Bissau to review the health information system, linkages between CRVS and health information, and the generation of the vital statistics.

Input has also been provided into the WHO CRVS Implementation Plan for 2021-2025.

d) United Nations Population Fund

The United Nations Population Fund has supported a study of CRVS systems in East and Southern African countries that are receiving support from the Fund.

e) Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has participated in drafting the Mortality Surveillance Framework for Africa and in regional consultations on the adoption of the framework by member States.

f) United Nations Children’s Fund

As a member of the CRVS Core Group, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has supported ECA teams during CRVS missions to various countries. As the secretariat of APAI-CRVS, ECA has been involved in the “No Name Campaign” of the African Union Commission and UNICEF, the goal of which is to promote birth registration.

Fourth Africa Civil Registration and Vital Services Day: Leadership for an Essential Service

Compiled by Aboubacar Traoré, Mali

Minister Mahamadou Kassogué visits the vital statistics digitization room
Mali, like other countries on the continent, celebrated the fourth Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day. In line with the conclusions of the fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, held in December 2017 in Mauritania, the Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day is marked every year on 10 August.

In 2021, the theme chosen across the continent is: "Leadership for an essential service: building resilient civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa that provide innovative, integrated and decentralized services for the post-COVID-19 period".

Activities taking place on the occasion aim to inform and raise awareness among all stakeholders and users on the importance of civil registration. The opening ceremony was presided over by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights and Keeper of the Seals, Mahamadou Kassogué, and was attended by the National Director of Civil Registration, Abdoulaye Alkadi, and many other officials.

After the words of welcome by the Mayor of the Urban Commune of Kati, the representative of the African Union, Hugues Martial Penda, emphasized in his address that the establishment of an efficient system for recording facts and statistics on civil status allowed Governments to improve their policies, in particular, in the areas of health, education and the protection of rights.

In his speech, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights said that the continent had made considerable progress in recent years in improving civil registration systems and vital statistics, especially birth registration. Mahamadou Kassogué emphasized that, with a national birth registration rate of 87 per cent, the authorities aimed to build a system where no element of civil status would escape registration.

“To this end, our country is committed to moving towards digital solutions. This is an opportunity for the Keeper of the Seals to note the already satisfactory results recorded in the Administrative Census for Civil Status (Recensement Administratif à Vocation d'État Civil), and in particular, the availability of an alphanumeric and biometric database of citizens, to serve as a matrix for the establishment of secure identification documents and contribute to the development of the electoral file”, said Mahamadou Kassogué.

This progress, he said, reflects the vision of the transitional Government as expressed in its action plan. However, notwithstanding these satisfactory results, this day was also an opportunity to take a critical look at your civil registration system and its role in building the rule of law, and to draw lessons on the impact of the current pandemic on the functioning of that system.

The representative of the European Union, Salvador Pinto da França, emphasized that it was thanks to civil registration that a person could realize his or her fundamental rights and enjoy justice. "That is why it is crucial to understand the need to declare births, marriages and deaths, and to obtain official civil registration certificates", he said.

For her part, UNICEF representative, Daniela Luciani congratulated the Government on the progress Mali has made since the adoption of the national strategy to strengthen the civil registration system, despite all the challenges that the country, like the rest of the continent, has faced during the COVID-19 health crisis. The visit by the officials to the digitization room and the presentation of an awareness-raising sketch on the importance of civil registration were highlights of the ceremony.

The reform of civil registration is a vast project headed by the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization. As part of the Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, Minister Tianarivelo Razafimahefa talked about it in an interview with Midi Madagasikara.

Midi Madagasikara: What are the main areas of civil registration reform that your department intends to undertake?

Tianarivelo Razafimahefa: We will carry out an evaluation of the systems for recording civil status details and establishing the statistics that these will provide, identifying the strong points and, in particular, areas that need to be reinforced.

A national strategic plan has been drawn up to improve the coverage of civil registration by including unique identification of individuals to ensure proximity and accessibility to civil registration services, and to modernize the management of civil registration by taking advantage of new information and communication technologies while maintaining standards of personal data protection. The National Centre for Civil Registration and Identity is being set up to manage the national digital civil registration database.

Midi Madagasikara: What is the current status of the reform implementation?

Tianarivelo Razafimahefa: The reform of the civil registration system has several phases: conceptualization, experimentation, implementation and scaling up. Currently, after ratification of the World Bank funding agreement for the Digital Governance and Identification Management System Project – PRODIGY, which aims to increase inclusive access to legal identity for all Malagasy citizens, we are in the first crucial phase of the reform. This phase is devoted to studies and technical designs that will allow us to lay a solid foundation for the new civil registration system, and above all, to ensure that it meets the real needs of the population as well as the relevant norms and standards.

Midi Madagasikara: Do you have the necessary means at your disposal to carry out this reform?
Tianarivelvo Razafimahefa: Civil registration is a State matter. That is why the Government of Madagascar is actively involved in the reform, given the stakes involved. Through the subsidies that the State allocates to the civil registry services, and also through the various investments intended for the communes, it goes without saying that the State is not skimping on its efforts to promote the right to identity, which is a fundamental right for every citizen.

Madagascar is among the nations working to improve the coverage of civil registration and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 16.9 (By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration) and the objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063. The reform project is part of this framework.

Currently, the Government is promoting close collaboration between the different sectors involved in the civil registration system to achieve greater convergence and better integration of the system. In addition, various development partners, notably the World Bank and UNICEF, are providing technical and financial support to achieve the objectives of the reform. However, given the scope of the project, support from other development partners is also being sought.

Midi Madagasikara: What are the concrete benefits of the reform of civil registration management?

Tianarivelvo Razafimahefa: The improved civil registration system will provide a reliable national database that will allow for effective decision-making tools and the design of relevant and effective public policies in various fields, particularly in the area of health and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. A robust civil registration system also guarantees the individuality and identity of every person and eliminates any possible errors, fraud and identity theft, which are sources of concern within the administration. In addition, it will make all public services more accessible to the population thanks to its interoperability.

The digital era encourages a country like Madagascar to exploit the potential of widely available innovative technologies. Indeed, in the context of the pandemic, the deployment of automated services can reduce the face-to-face interaction required to obtain civil status documents.

The digitalization of a wide range of processes, from notification to certification, offers enormous potential to transform slow, passive and reactive civil registration systems that depend on the presence of people into resilient, proactive and agile systems. From a statistical point of view, data from the civil registry are indispensable for the production of statistics related to the population thanks to their permanent updating and universal character, which can eventually relay to the general population census.

Midi Madagasikara: In remote communes, the management of civil registration still presents several shortcomings. How do you intend to fill these gaps in the short term?

Tianarivelvo Razafimahefa: Indeed, some localities are far from the main towns of the communes and therefore from the civil registration centre. This has an impact on the registration of civil status events. Efforts have already been undertaken to address this, notably the extension of the deadline for declaring births and deaths to 30 days instead of 12. In addition, in order to be closer to the population, the new law relating to civil registration allows for the establishment of a local civil registration office in fokontany that are isolated or far from the main towns, to
receive declarations of births and deaths. In addition, free registration and delivery of the first copy of the birth certificate is required.

*Midi Madagasikara*: Does the celebration of the Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics this year augur well for the reform?

Tianarivelo Razafimahefa: Every year, Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day is celebrated on 10 August, and the challenges raised this year are about leadership for an essential service to build resilient civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa that provide innovative, integrated and decentralized services, especially for the post-COVID-19 period. Given the importance of these challenges, this reform requires a very high and real level of commitment from the various national and international stakeholders. Today, I can tell you that Madagascar is on the right track!


**Medical facilities awarded for registration of births and deaths**
Compiled by the Editor, *The New Times*, Rwanda: editor@newtimesrwanda.com.

The Ministry of Local Government has awarded five hospitals and ten health centres in recognition of their support for the civil registration exercise following the extension of the service to health facilities.

Since last year, registration of births and deaths has been made available in health facilities to help citizens who have to travel long distances to the sector office to access the service.

These outstanding hospitals and health centres were recognized during the celebration of Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August. They fall into four categories: university teaching hospitals, provincial and district hospitals, health centres and private hospitals.

In the first category, the University Teaching Hospital of Butare, located in Huye District, scored 93.6 per cent and was awarded 4 million Rwandan francs (RwF).

At the level of referral, provincial and districts hospitals, three hospitals were recognized: Rwinkavu Hospital, which scored 95.9 per cent and was awarded RwF4 million; Kirehe Hospital, which scored 82.7 per cent and was awarded RwF3 million; and Byumba Hospital, which scored 80.2 per cent and was awarded RwF2 million.

Ten health centres were recognized, while in the category of private hospitals, La Croix du Sud Hospital, in Gasabo District, was recognized with 96.6 per cent and was awarded RwF3 million.

“The awarding of the health facilities will encourage others to put in more effort to do it on time”, reads a statement from the Ministry of Local Government.

Danny Musa, the Chief Operations Manager at La Croix du Sud Hospital, told *The New Times* that they attributed the achievement to hard work by their staff and following advice from the Government. “There is a system we use in the registration of births and deaths, and
our employees are trained in how to use it. Management also makes sure there is follow up to deliver good service to clients”, he added.

In June 2020, the Cabinet approved a Ministerial Order giving a health officer the powers of a civil registrar. The same Cabinet meeting also approved a Presidential Order determining the responsibilities of a cell executive officer. The latter authorizes the cell Executive Secretary, based on the information provided by the head of the village where the event took place, to register births and deaths that occur in places other than a health facility for persons with known civil status.

The development follows the publication, in February 2020, of an amended law governing persons and family, with clauses on civil registration changed to improve the registration of civil events like births and deaths. The revised law, among other things, states that an official of a health facility has the power of civil registrar to record births and deaths that occur there.

The initiative was officially launched on Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day in 2020.

In the past, notification was allowed, but not registration, as a civil registrar had to be at a health facility to carry it out.


**Resources on civil registration and vital statistics**


On 17 July 2021, His Majesty King Letsie III officially launched the automation of birth registration in health facilities in Lesotho as the nation celebrated his fifty-eighth birthday. During the launch, His Majesty handed over birth certificates to parents of newborns (five of whom had been born that morning). The initiative is part of the country’s efforts to meet target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
Uganda

The National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) is encouraging parents to register and secure birth certificates for children across the country.

This is part of a week-long effort as Uganda joins the rest of Africa in marking Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day.

Angola

A citizenship fair was held from 11 to 13 August at Largo Soweto, in Luanda, to mark Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day.
Benin celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on Tuesday, 10 August 2021 from 3.30 to 5.00 p.m.


The Democratic Republic of the Congo celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

Madagascar celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

The sixth meeting of State executives has taken place in the Niger, as a prelude to the Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, under the theme: “Challenges of computerization of the civil registration and vital statistics system in the Niger”.
Nigeria
The National Population Commission, in partnership with CRVS stakeholders, created a road map for universal digital birth registration in Nigeria. Launched on 10 August 2021 on the occasion of the fourth Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, the road map lays out a clear vision, delineates the roles of various government agencies, builds the Government’s capacity to deliver, formulates an action plan, sets a timetable and milestones, and optimizes the cost of the digital birth registration process in the country. The goal is to fully implement the road map before the of the corresponding deadline set out in the 2030 Agenda.

United Republic of Tanzania
To mark the fourth Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, a seminar is being held with leaders of special groups (e.g. those living with albinism or hearing, sight and mobility problems) to raise awareness among them of birth and death registration, so that they may, in turn, raise awareness among their members. The seminar was presided over by the Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs.
Côte d’Ivoire celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

Eswatini also commemorated this important day and used it as an opportunity to launch the fifth annual CRVS report.

The first Provincial Meeting of Registries and Notaries took place on 10 August in Matola, Maputo Province, under the auspices of the Provincial Service of Justice and Labour, through the Department of Registries and Notaries, under the theme “Towards a safe, harmonized and efficient registry and notary system”.
The event coincided with Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, and had as its main objective to evaluate the work of the sector and ways to improve the quality of the services provided. The meeting was presided over by Vitória Diogo, Secretary of State in Maputo Province.

The meeting discussed the following subjects: the state of the civil registration system and vital statistics in Maputo Province; innovations in family law and the implications for the civil registration code; annotation and communication of the services performed by the registry offices; the Land Registry in the context of ICTs-SIRP; the process of proof of inheritance for minors or incapacitated persons; and the main innovations in the changes to the Law of Succession with implications for the notary code.

In her opening speech, Ms. Diogo highlighted the progress made by the Department of Registrars and Notaries in reducing the waiting time for citizens to obtain a service, and in coverage of the registry offices by the civil registration and vital statistics system, the computerized criminal registry system in all districts, and the computerization of the real estate registry in the city of Matola. She recognized the challenge that the sector faced in the automation of services.

Cameroon celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

Cameroon
Guinea-Bissau celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

UNICEF Guinea-Bissau @u... · 17 min   
Today we celebrate the African day of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa. In-depth, @UNICEF collaborates with the government to expand innovative initiatives and improve statistical data in the country. Join us & the rest of Africa to celebrate this day.  
#AfricaCRVSDay

Rwanda celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

AFRICAN CRVS DAY CELEBRATION
**Mali**

Mali celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

![Mali Celebration](image1.jpg)

**Lesotho**

Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day was celebrated in Lesotho with the launch of the automated birth and death registration system at Maluti Adventist Hospital.

The event was presided over by Minister of Home Affairs, Motlalentoa Letsosa. All media, Ministry of Home Affairs stakeholders and the public were invited to the launching of the new system.

![Lesotho Event](image2.jpg)
Kenya  
Kenya marked Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day 2021 with the issuing of birth certificates to children in residential institutions and children with disabilities, who are among populations at high risk of lacking legal identity documents.

Source: [https://twitter.com/VioletNjenga/status/1425115848168071169/photo1](https://twitter.com/VioletNjenga/status/1425115848168071169/photo1).

Guinea  
Guinea celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

[Image of children holding birth certificates]

[Image of official announcement in French]

[Image of official announcement in French]

[Image of official announcement in French]
Sierra Leone celebrated Africa Civil Registration and Vital Services Day on 10 August 2021, under the theme, “Leadership for an essential service”.

Orange Money Partners With Western Union to Enhance Overseas Transactions

NCRA Commemorates 4th Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day

NP-SL Ltd Always Ensures that its Customers are Optimally Satisfied
The Gambia has started to digitalize birth and death registration, in coordination with the vaccination process, using opencrvs.org, and with the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, in collaboration with the Gambia data-entry team for electronic civil registration and vital statistic development.