Report on Somalia mentorship program achievements

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Strengthening CRVS coordination at the national level

The mentorship programme supported the Civil Registration (CR) Department of the Ministry of Interior to strengthen CRVS coordination efforts at the national level through organising an orientation workshop during the Somalia country mission. The workshop gathered representatives from the key institutions from the Federal Government directly involved in CRVS processes in Somalia and UN partners, including UNICEF and UNHCR. Participants of the orientation workshop, including representatives from the Civil Registration Department of the Ministry of Interior, National Bureau of Statistics, and Ministries of Health, Justice, and Religious Affairs, had the opportunity to visit and benefit from a half-day study tour to CRS Kenya. Participants have seen and discovered how different actors of the CRVS collaborate and coordinate their efforts in a well-functioning system. With the support of the mentorship programme, the CR department submitted a project idea to the Global Grants Program - Round 6 - to strengthen CRVS in Somalia by establishing and enhancing governance and coordination mechanisms at the National and Subnational levels. Although the GGP did not consider Somalia’s project idea for funding, the commitment to strengthen CRVS governance and coordination will remain a top priority for the CR department and the CRVS National TWG in 2022.

Before the country mission, the Civil Registration Department held the CRVS National Technical Working Group (TWG) on 17 November 2021. The Civil Registration Department Director reported to the CRVS National TWG about the CRVS policy development and approval process. The Director also explained the new engagement with UNECA (APAI-CRVS), the upcoming CRVS expert group meeting of African registrar generals, the planned ECA’s Somalia mission, and the orientation workshop on the mentorship programme. In addition, the country-mentor provided detailed updates about the objectives and plans of the mentorship programme during the annual CRVS stakeholder engagement meeting on 29 December 2021. The federal-level TWG members confirmed their commitment and readiness to accelerate the improvement of the CRVS and keep the momentum in 2022. Representatives from different institutions also committed to supporting and cooperating with the country-mentor and the newly recruited legal and policy consultants by the CR department and recommended prioritising implementation of the CRVS policy in Banadir Region (Mogadishu) as a pilot.

Progress on the CRVS legal framework

The CR department recruited a legal consultant funded by UNICEF in early December 20201 to complete reviewing the zero draft of the CRVS Bill. The legal consultant submitted the preliminary draft of the bill in February to the CR department. The CR department plans to engage ECA in reviewing the CRVS bill after completing an internal review of the current draft with the help of the country mentor. After completing the internal review, the department would circulate the CRVS bill to the Federal level TWG members. However, the CR department plans to engage all relevant stakeholders in reviewing the CRVS bill before tabling it to the council of Ministers.

To inform the revision of the CRVS bill and establish the status of CRVS and processes at the sub-national level, the CR carried-out field visit missions to the capital cities of Galmudug and Jubbaland States of Somalia. The country-mentor, the policy, and legal advisers provided vital support to the department in planning and formulating objectives of the field-visit missions. The planned field visits to the two states took place in December 2021 and February 2022, respectively.
Other achievements

- Supported the Civil Registration Department Director to prepare a presentation on Somalia’s CRVS status at the Expert Group Meeting of African Registrar Generals in Kigali/Rwanda-23rd -26 November 2021;
- Contributed to reporting Day 3 of the EGMRG in Kigali on 25 November 2021;
- Facilitated and provided logistical support to representatives from Somalia’s Federal institutions attending the country mission and the orientation workshop in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2021 in Nairobi;
- Contributed and introduced the mentorship programme to participants of the end of the year CRVS stakeholder engagement meeting in December 2021 organised by the CR department;
- Interviewed key staff at the CR department of the Ministry of Interior to complete the in-depth qualitative questionnaire on CRVS capacity building needs;
- Supported the Civil Registration Department plan for CRVS field assessment visit to the Jubbaland State of Somalia between 15-18 February 2022;
- Contributed to the drafting of Somalia’s country mentorship mission report - draft stage;
- Completed the obligatory core modules of the introductory self-paced CRVS course and attended the Gender Foundations in Health Data seminars scheduled for February 2022;
- Attended CRVS mentorship coordination meeting, the CRVS core group meeting, and CR department weekly meetings.

Challenges

- **Incomplete Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:** The gaps in the legal framework remain the main challenge hindering progress on improving the CRVS in Somalia. Although the CR department’s efforts to develop the CRVS bill are in an advanced stage; still, it is not clear when the country’s 11th Parliament will be inaugurated due to delays in the ongoing elections. Other missing laws include the privacy and data protection laws and other state-level regulations on the CRVS. The CR department observed these gaps and others, including inconsistent registration of vital events during the field-visit missions to the Federal Member States (FMSs) and the capital – Mogadishu or Banadir Region.

- **Limited financial and political commitment for CRVS:** due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Somalia compounded with the effects of the COVID-19, the funding opportunities for the CRVS improvement from the government and donors are increasingly inadequate and in decline. Focus on the parliamentary elections impacted the political commitments on improving the CRVS at the national and local levels.

- **Capacity and awareness challenges:** Due to the lack of advocacy and learning materials in the Somali language, awareness of the public and decision-makers about the benefits of civil registration remains a significant challenge in Somalia. Moreover, civil registration offices and services providing agencies are understaffed, and there are no capacity assessments conducted or regular training programmes available for civil registration staff.

Ongoing and planned activities for the next quarter

- Completing the internal review of the draft CRVS bill and raising awareness of its value;
- Organising the CRVS National TWG first quarterly meeting for 2022;
- Organising consultations with the civil registration actors in Mogadishu and the States;
- Organising broader business process mapping and redesign workshop with the support of the ECA that gathers all governmental stakeholders of the CRVS in Somalia.