



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Legal Identity in Africa

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United Nations
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Background

- Globally, 1.5 billion people did not have legal identity documents in 2019. Declined to about 850 million as of 2023.
- The situation is worse in Africa where about 542 million people do not have identity cards. Of this number, around 95 million children under five have never had their births recorded, and 120 million children do not have a birth certificate.
- The United Nations Legal Identity Agenda 2020 –2030 (UN LIA) backed by the Deputy Secretary General, was launched as a One UN approach to support Member States building holistic, country owned, sustainable civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems
- Its efforts focus on closing the global identity gap with a benchmark goal of **‘more than 300 million by 2025 and, in turn, providing Member States with the vital statistics and demographic information needed for socio economic gains, better public administration, planning monitoring- Target set by DSG.**



ECA

TARGET 16·9

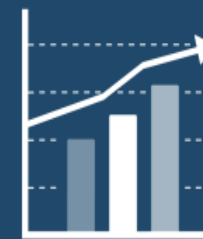
16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



PROVIDE UNIVERSAL LEGAL IDENTITY

TARGET 17·19

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SYSTEMIC ISSUES

FURTHER DEVELOP MEASUREMENTS OF PROGRESS

Contextualizing Legal Identity

Definition: The United Nations Legal Identity Agenda refers to the holistic approach to civil registration of all vital events, production of vital statistics, the establishment and maintenance of population registers and identity management apparatus from birth to death, with full interoperability between these functions in a simultaneous manner, according to international standards and recommendations and in compliance with human rights of all people concerned, including the right to privacy.

Principles

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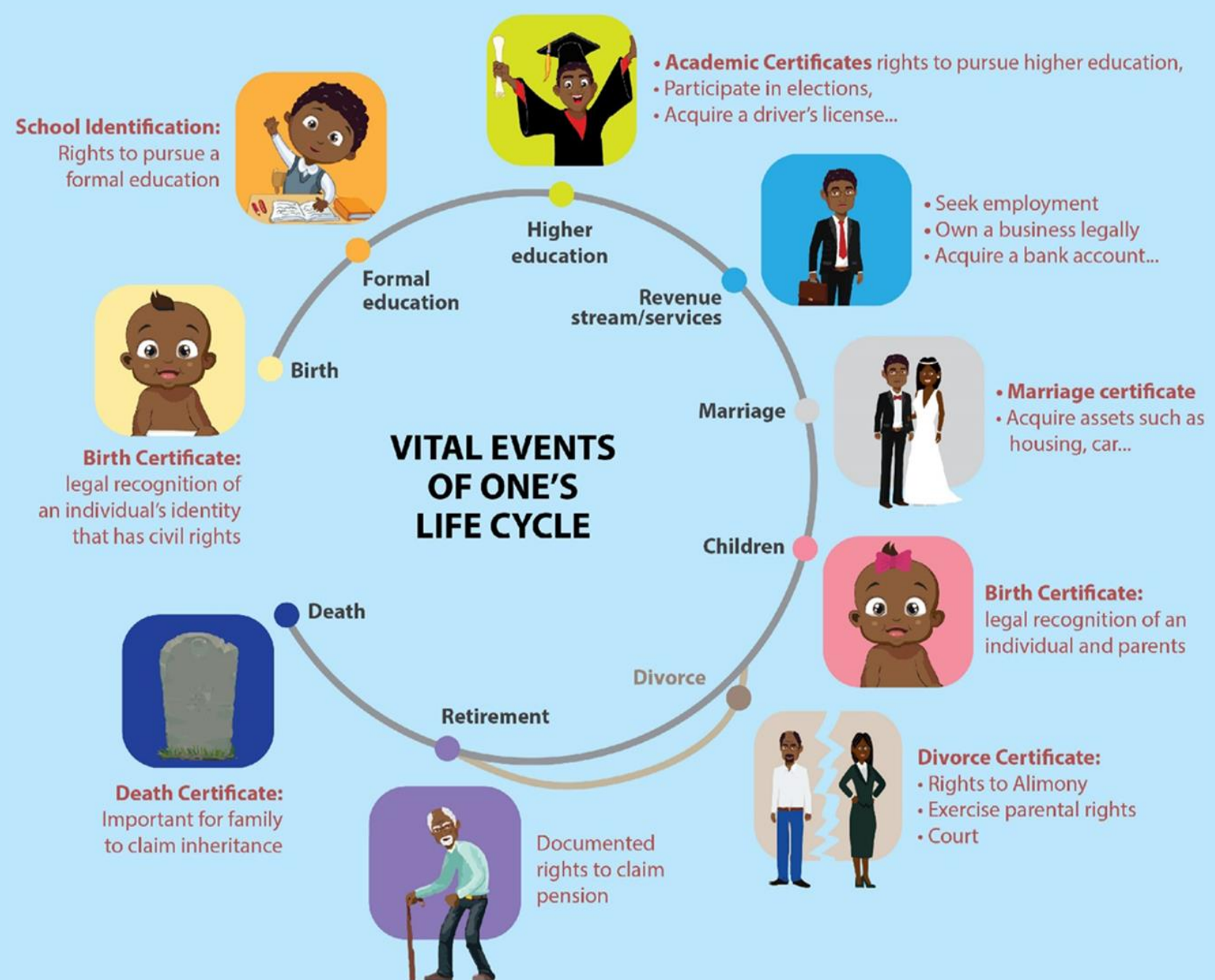
- Legal identity for all starting from birth is a game changer to close the global identity gap & fulfil the promise to leave no one behind and realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Everyone has the right to be recognized as a person before the law, as enshrined in Article 6 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and several other international human rights and humanitarian law instruments
- Without proof of legal identity, individuals may not be able to acquire a nationality & become stateless.
- This right is non-derogable—meaning it is considered such a fundamental human right that it can never be restricted nor be suspended, even in an emergency. In the context of international human rights law, all Member States have the obligation to ensure the legal recognition of individuals in their territory.

Defining Legal Identity

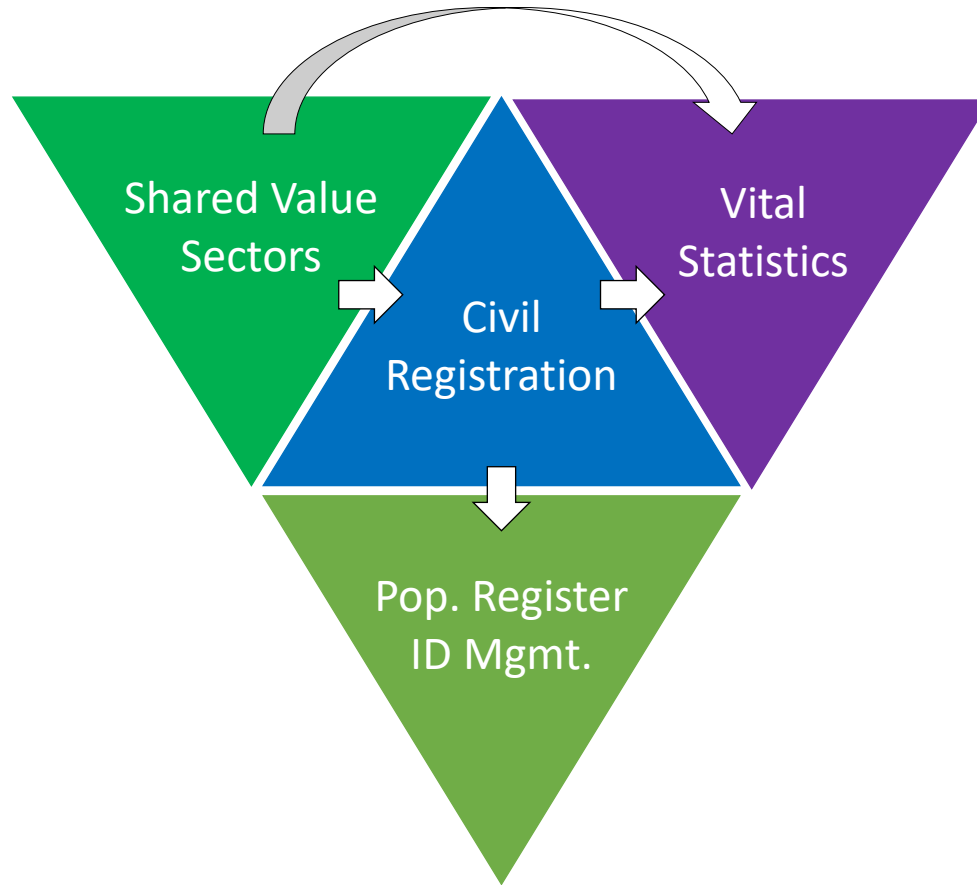
- **Legal identity** is defined as the basic characteristics of an individual's identity. e.g. name, sex, place and date of birth conferred through registration and the issuance of a certificate by an authorized civil registration authority following the occurrence of birth.
- In the absence of birth registration, legal identity may be conferred by a legally-recognized identification authority but it should be linked to the civil registration system to ensure a holistic approach to legal identity from birth to death.
- Legal identity is retired by the issuance of a death certificate by the civil registration authority upon registration of death.
- In the case of **refugees**, member States are primarily responsible for issuing proof of legal identity. The issuance of proof of legal identity to refugees may also be administered by an internationally recognized and mandated authority.

Lifecycle Approach :

The Vital Events Link through a Unique ID



Holistic Approach to Legal Identity



- Life-cycle approach to identity
- Supports interoperability of identity systems for the production of vital statistics
- Sustainable solution to provide legal identity for all, & country-owned demographic data
- Reduces dependence on sector-specific monitoring systems

Legal Identity in the Global Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals)

- Sustainable Development Goals
 - Target 16.9 – legal identity for all including birth registration by 2030
 - Target 17.19 (b) – countries have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration
- To realize these targets, the DSG established the UN Legal Identity Expert Group in September 2018.
 - 13 UN agencies, under the Co-chairs - UNDP, UNICEF and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- UN Legal Identity Expert Group operationalized target 16.9 through the UN Legal Identity Agenda launched in 2019 at the 5th Lusaka Conference of Ministers responsible for CRVS

Relationship Between CRVS and the SDGs

*We resolve, between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger **everywhere**; to combat **inequalities within and among countries**; to build peaceful, just and **inclusive societies**; to protect **human rights** (...). (...) we pledge that **no one will be left behind**. (...) we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for **all segments of society**.*

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

CRVS

Is universal and inclusive



Leaves no one behind

Is a building block for an identity ecosystem



Helps improve service delivery to all people

Provides legal documents of vital events to each individual



Helps realize and protect human rights

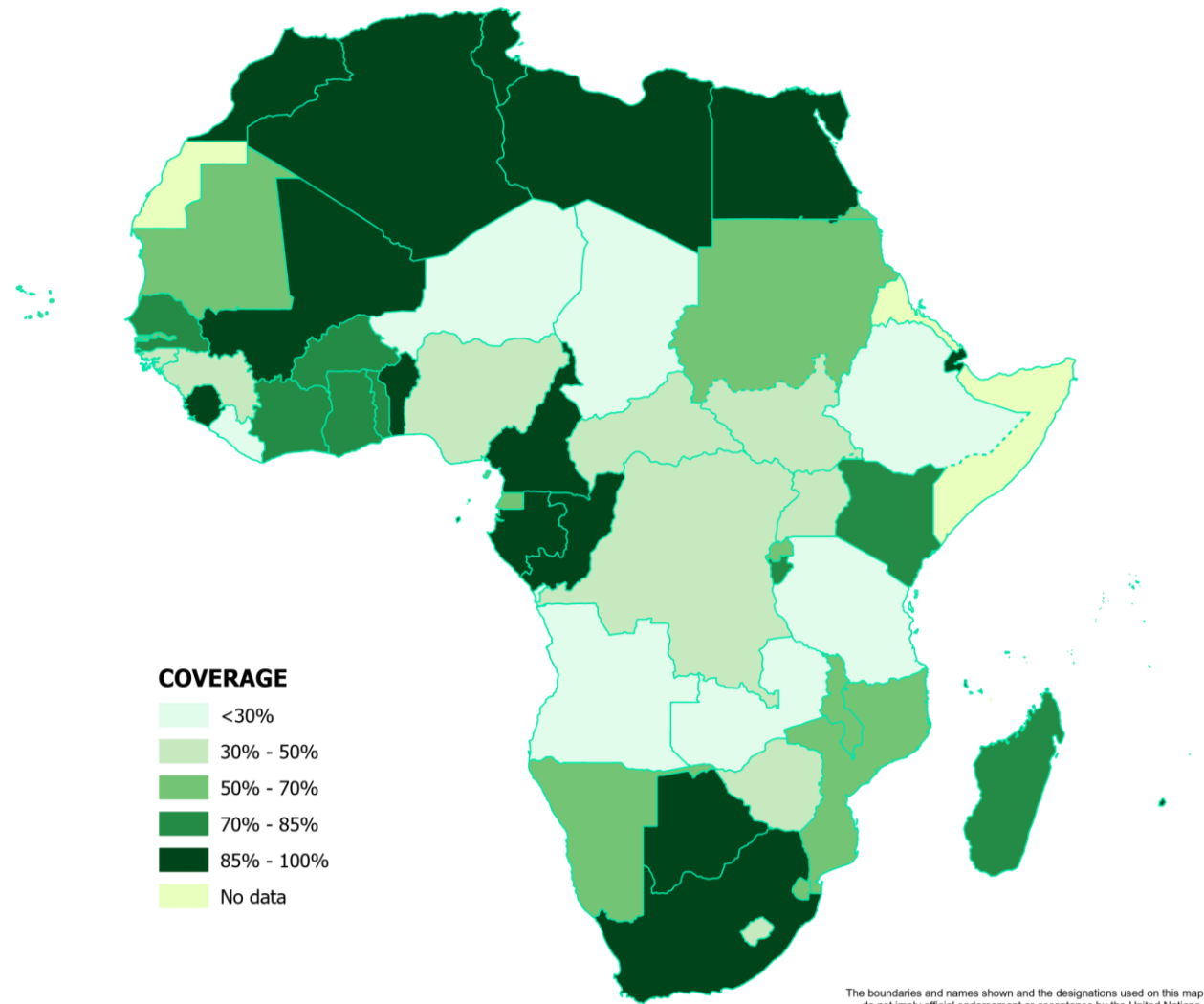
Provides vital statistics/population data at geographical lower level



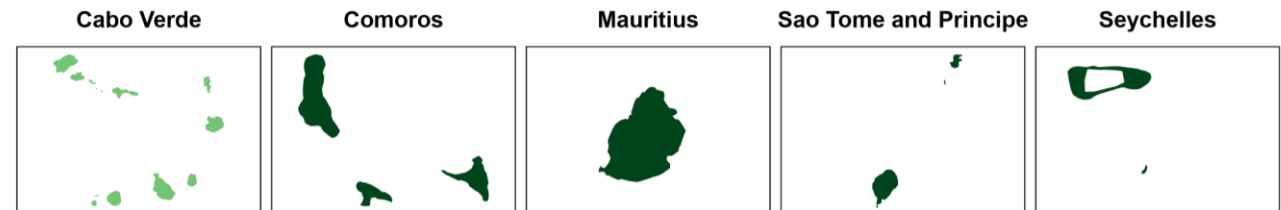
Enables monitoring of policy effects

Where are we now?....current situation

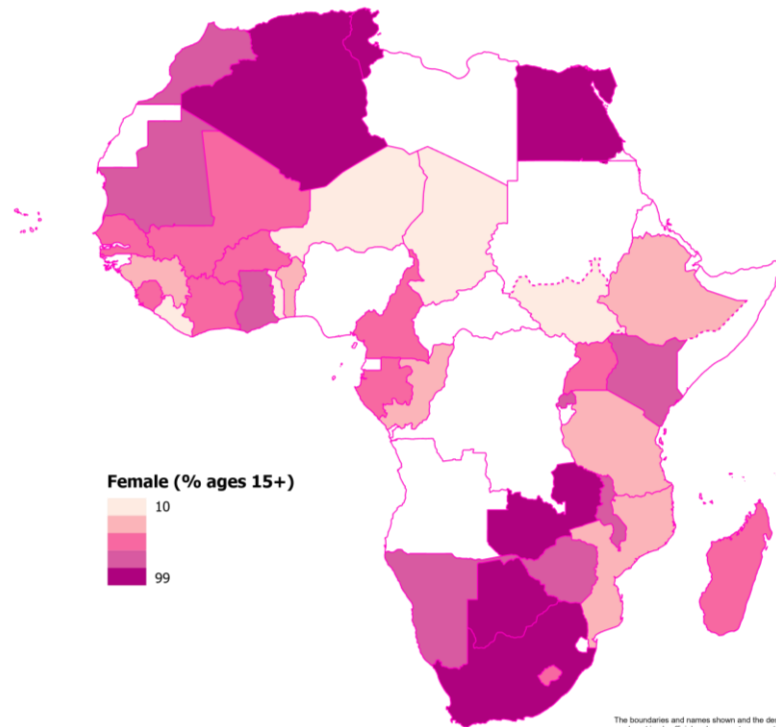
BIRTH CERTIFICATE OWNERSHIP (Foundational Identity)



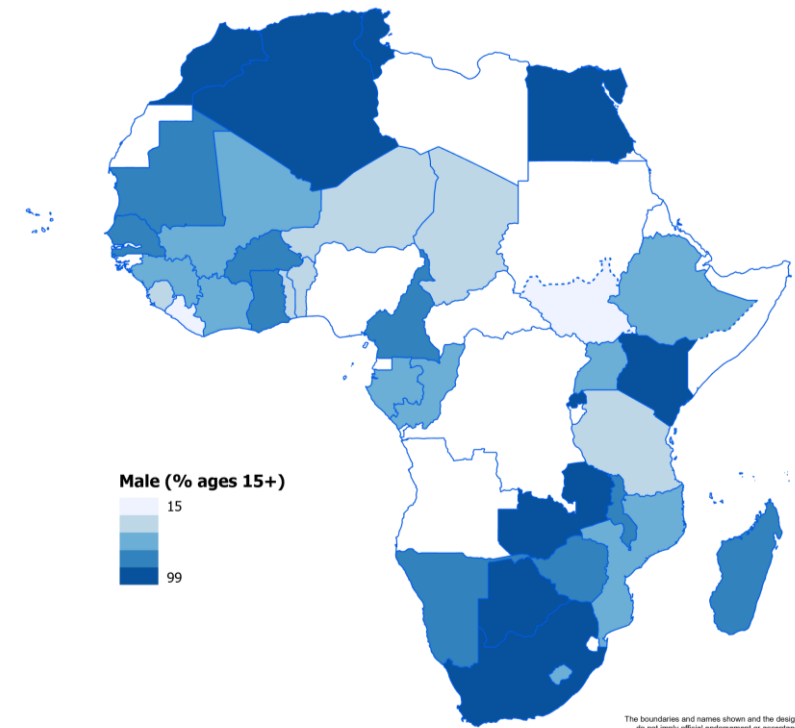
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Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.



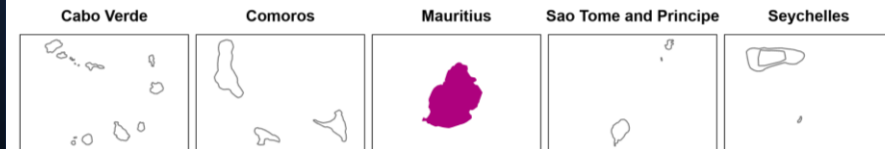
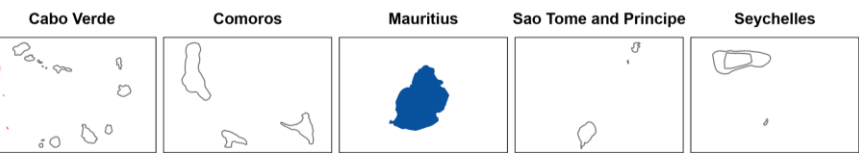
NATIONAL IDENTITY OWNERSHIP IN AFRICA



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Pillars to Increase Coverage in the New Strategic Plan



Innovation

E-CRVS: Digitalization of recording, notification, registration, and certification of all vital events

Move from paper-based to digital systems that reduce the face to face interaction



Integration

Life-cycle approach accounting for people from birth to death

Interoperability and real-time data sharing for efficient e-governance and e-commerce



Decentralization

Accessibility, Availability and Affordability

Demand side: acceptability and need for legal identities

Development of CRVS & ID Systems that are Fit for Purpose

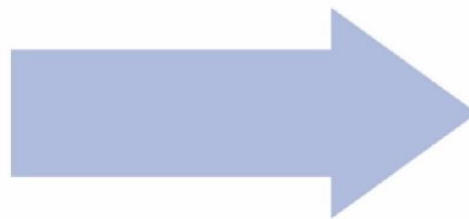
AS IS

RIGID
SLOW
COMPLEX
PASSIVE
REACTIVE
STANDALONE

Continuous analysis and re-design of CR and ID processes as needed to apply innovative technological

TO BE

FLEXIBLE
AGILE
SIMPLIFIED
RESILIENT
PROACTIVE
INTEROPERABLE



Resources Developed by APAI-CRVS to Improve CRVS & ID Management

CRVS System Improvement framework



CRVS implementation guidelines



Research Briefs



The CRVS E-learning programs



Knowledge Platforms



CRVS Country Profiles



Way Forward.....to Increase Coverage

- Through Ministerial Conferences, advocate for the political will and commitments to provide and fund legal identity as public good and service
- Advocate for adequate funding through the public fiscus for implementation of civil registration and national identities
- Member States to put in place institutional capacity amongst relevant line ministries and departments to better, plan, budget, advocate and scale up delivery of legal documents
- Member States to provide adequate infrastructure, supply and logistics chain to support service delivery
- Communities have access to information and knowledge about the availability and benefits of civil registration services



Thanks

Ideas
to
Action