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1. Background

1. In majority of African countries, past initiatives and efforts aimed at improving Civil Registration¹ and Vital Statistics² (CRVS) systems were largely dominated by isolated project-based and institution-led ad hoc exercises. The CRVS system was seen to be a non-functioning statistical system and therefore, the above-mentioned efforts in the region were largely statistically oriented with a view to obtaining improved vital statistics on a regular basis. The support in this area mainly came from international agencies such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and to some extent from the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) approached it from a child rights perspective and was mainly concerned with birth registration. The involvement and contributions of regional organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the African Union Commission (AUC) had not been significant.

2. Civil registration is multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral in nature. This calls not only for a coordinated but also a holistic approach in improving and strengthening the systems. Effective civil registration is about good governance that requires strong legislative provisions, efficient operations, and management systems within the given administrative and political structure of the country. It also has to be backed by a suitable monitoring and evaluation system. Above all, political commitment to improve civil registration systems so as to provide the necessary basic services to the general public and to generate useable vital statistics in a country within a given time frame is imperative. The project-based approaches and pilots did not succeed as they did not address these core systemic issues dogging the CRVS systems in the countries. Again, in most instances, there were no properly developed national plans on CRVS, either at the mid term or long term with clear targets and systematic mechanisms for evaluating successes and failures. Likewise, past

¹ The United Nations (UN) defines civil registration as the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population as provided through decrees or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements of each country. Civil registration has dual purpose: administrative and legal on the one hand, and statistical, demographic and epidemiological on the other.

² Vital statistics are used to get precise and up-to-date measurements of demographic changes and for the study and analysis of trends. Vital statistics are also primary data sources for the health sector in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of different health interventions and epidemiological studies. Measurements and monitoring of many of the MDG indicators require vital statistics data on a continuous and timely basis.

interventions from regional and international development partners were not guided by systematically developed regional plans, thus contributing to uncoordinated and fragmented resource use and limited impact.

3. The other major drawback of past interventions was the inadequate understanding of the interface and inter-linkages of civil registration functions with the service providers and individual beneficiaries. Improving CRVS involves parallel efforts in generating demand and ensuring that there is adequate supply to meet these demands. Demand could be generated for the registration records that would not only benefit individuals but also organizations, especially those in the government. The demand could also be generated for use of vital statistics for socio-economic planning. Supply refers to provision and maintenance of the operations of CRVS functions in meeting the requirements of the beneficiaries, which can be individuals or organizations. The CRVS systems in most countries hitherto have not made conscious efforts in creating demand for the services and cannot demonstrate the immense possibilities that a CRVS system has in improving the delivery systems of different sectoral institutions operating at different levels of administration.

4. In view of the issues stated above, it was clear that in African countries, improvement of civil registration system initiatives had to be re-designed and overhauled; adopting a much more holistic approach to ensure that it not only provides efficient service to the people but also plays a fundamental role in modernizing the African judicial and public administration, besides providing the much needed vital statistics. There was also a need to develop a regional framework that could guide systemic reforms and help make sustainable progress in the area of CRVS in African countries. The importance of a coordinated approach among all Pan-African institutions/agencies working in this area in Africa was also strongly felt.

5. The recommendations from the regional workshop on civil registration and vital statistics systems that was conducted in June 2009 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, identified and addressed some of the fundamental bottlenecks that came in the way of improvement of systems in the region. The workshop further reviewed holistically, various sectors and services being affected by the incomplete nature of CRVS systems in a country (Annex 1). It was also found important to devise a comprehensive regional roadmap that brings all actors to a common regional operational platform. Accordingly, the African Centre for

Statistics (ACS) at the UNECA, as per the mandate given by the workshop, initiated the preparation of a Medium-Term Plan (MTP)³ in close collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB). The preparation of the MTP was supported by field-level information that was collected from field assessment missions in five countries.

6. The First Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration was held on 13-14 August 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and could be considered to be one of the most important initiatives coordinated and led by the three Pan-African organizations. Over 40 African ministers in charge of civil registration attended the conference. During the conference, the ministers made commitments to improve the CRVS in their respective countries and to support the efforts being made in this regard by the regional organizations. They made a number of declarations (Annex 2) providing the policy ground for moving the regional agenda into action. The ministers also endorsed the MTP and directed the regional organizations to organize an expert meeting to finalize it based on comments obtained during the conference. In January 2011, experts from countries, regional and international organizations reviewed and finalized the Plan.

7. The MTP identifies the agencies that will be responsible for the implementation of various activities and is appropriately costed. The first activity identified under the MTP is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of CRVS systems at the regional level covering each of the countries. The outcome of the assessment study will serve as baseline information for the implementation of the MTP. The Plan extends from 2010 to 2015 and is expected to serve as a guiding tool for countries, regional and international organizations; in managing interventions and monitoring achievements in CRVS systems in Africa.

8. The ministers in charge of civil registration in the first conference had requested the AUC to institutionalize the conference as a permanent platform that would meet once every two years to take stock of the progress of the regional initiative. The ministers also requested the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) to support and contribute to the regional initiative. Accordingly, the 6th ASSD adopted CRVS to be the statistical theme and focus area for the symposia for five consecutive years beginning with the

³ Reforming and Improving Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa – Regional Medium-Term Plan:2010-2015.

7th symposium held in January 2012 in South Africa. The ASSD brings together national statistics offices, all major statistical organizations and professional statisticians in Africa. Beginning with the 7th ASSD and over the next four symposia, civil registration authorities and Directors of NSOs will meet under one roof to deliberate on various issues and challenges of CRVS systems.

2. CRVS Operations and its Linkages

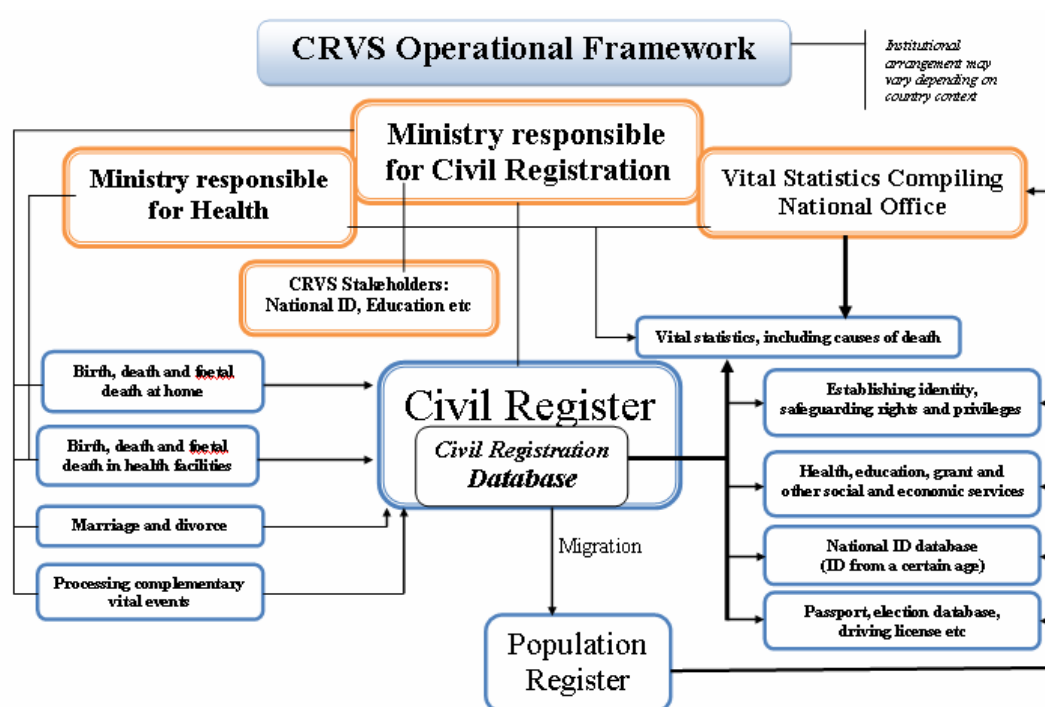
9. The conditions and circumstances of the occurrence of different vital events⁴ are affected by diverse factors such as social, cultural, religious etc. Again, vital events can occur in different places. For example, births, deaths and foetal deaths can occur either at home or in health facilities; similarly, marriages can occur in religious institutions or in courts. Events can even occur under different circumstances such as in conflicts, accidents, natural disasters etc. Appropriate institutional and human infrastructure and operational procedures need to be established for capturing all these events of diverse nature. On the other hand, civil registration operations need to be linked and interfaced with various other systems that cater for the demands of individuals, households and institutions in the country. The systems need to follow systematic workflows and procedures and should aim at producing high quality products and services at all levels of operation.

10. Civil registration involves interactions between individuals, households and different institutions, especially government organs at various levels, and benefits all of the above. These interactions and inter-linkages can be conceptualized into a holistic and integrated operational framework by clearly identifying products and services, agencies that are responsible for delivering them, and the beneficiaries that use them. The development of such a comprehensive and holistic framework calls for a thorough analysis and conceptualization of the interactions and work processes. Chart 1 presents such a complete operational framework, depicting the multi-dimensional linkages and inter-play of CRVS systems with other systems. The framework reflects an ideal CRVS system that a country should aspire to achieve so as to attain complete registration of vital events and also maintain an efficient service

⁴ *The vital events considered in civil registration system include live birth, death, foetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment, judicial separation, adoption, legitimization and recognition. Birth, death, marriage and divorce events comprise the priority vital events required by countries to be registered and the statistics to be produced in a continuous and permanent basis.*

delivery system and improved governance in a given socio-economic and cultural context. The framework depicts the continental aspiration in moving each of the member States towards the regional objectives and targets as set in the MTP. Hence, countries are expected to adopt the proposed framework, which would reflect their commitment in supporting the implementation of the regional programme.

Chart 1: Complete Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems and their Multi-sectoral Services and Linkages in a Country

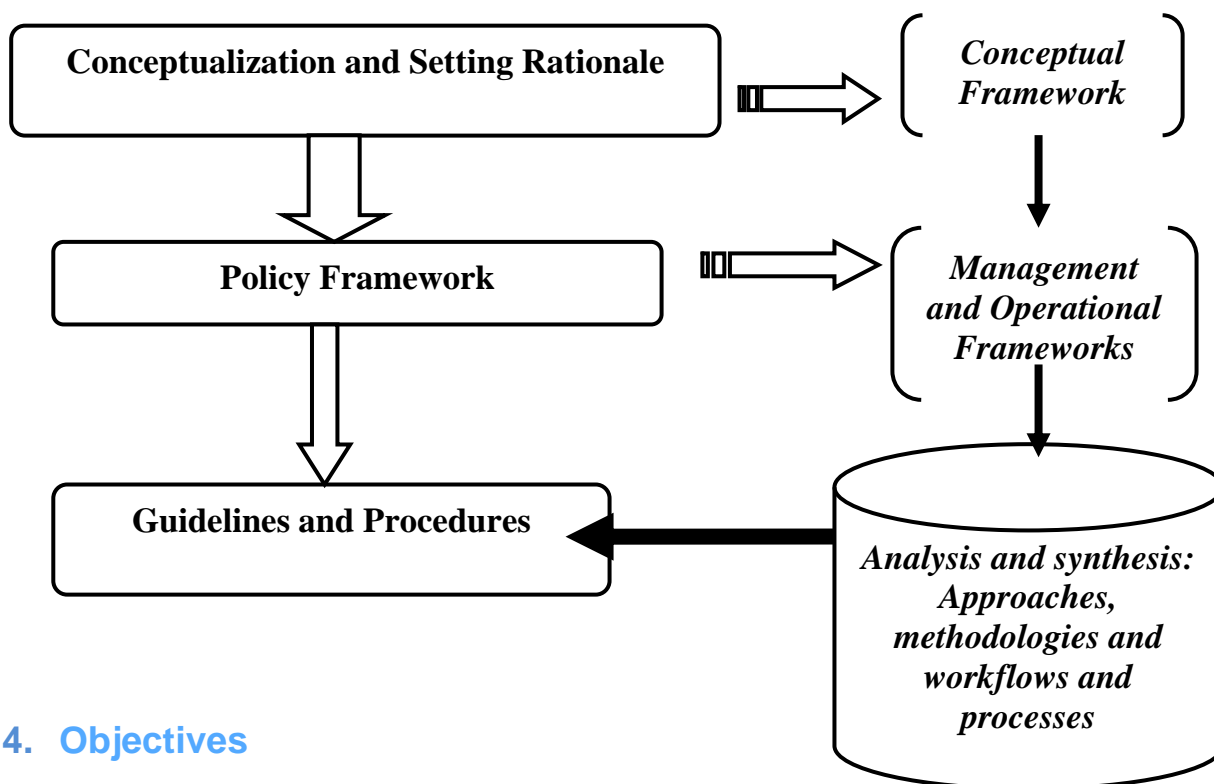


3. Conceptualizing and Setting Rationales for Registration of Vital Events in Africa

11. The rationale for registering vital events in a country and their functions and services from the international perspective are well defined and documented in the United Nations CRVS guidelines. The concepts and recommended methodologies of registration of vital events, which are the foundations for the development of the management and operational frameworks of the systems, are also presented in those documentations though so much work remains in aligning them to the current developments across countries and regions. Adoption of the international concepts, principles and rationales to national and regional contexts has not been properly articulated and documented in Africa. Initiatives without properly defined rationale will not

have enough strength to sustain itself and owned by implementers. Furthermore, integration of operational and management processes and procedures to national administrative and political systems also depend on proper setting of rationales and conceptualization of operations and processes. In the majority of African countries, the building of rationale and conceptualizing the processes of CRVS systems seem to have been overlooked largely due reliance on past practices during colonial times. The Chart below schematically presents a process of evolution of the CRVS framework that begins with building of rationale and finally developing the guidelines and procedures through well defined steps.

Chart 2: Framework for Conceptualizing and Setting Rationale for CRVS Systems in Africa



4. Objectives

12. The Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) emerged from the necessity of bringing together various CRVS initiatives on the continent into a common and consolidated policy and advocacy framework. The regional programme was developed based on international standards, principles and recommendations of CRVS and following the political commitment and policy directives of the ministers in charge of civil registration that urged for a holistic and integrated approach to reforming and improving CRVS systems in the continent.

13. The overall objective of APAI-CRVS is to provide management and programmatic guidance to the regional agenda of reforming and improving CRVS systems. Specifically, the regional programme will provide guidance on the institutional and operational linkages, workflows and results management mechanisms in a more comprehensive and holistic manner, encompassing the inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral interfaces of CRVS systems.

14. In order to attain the expected objectives, the programme will devise technical and operational frameworks and mechanisms and policy directives, and will use outcomes of various national, regional and international partnership forums on CRVS.

5. Guiding Principles

15. APAI-CRVS recognizes the socio-economic and political diversities of African countries and thus, the need for a more decentralized approach that promotes and enhances indigenous knowledge and creativity in resolving problems and challenges of improving CRVS systems, keeping in view of country contexts.

APAI-CRVS is anchored on the following major guiding principles:

- Promoting country ownership and leadership;
- Promoting coordination and integration between Civil Registration Authorities (CRAs) and National Statistics Offices (NSOs);
- Promoting systematic and coordinated approaches;
- Promoting phased-based, holistic and integrated approaches;
- Constituting strong regional policy and advocacy forums;
- Building capacities of national CRVS focal institutions;
- Promoting partnership at country and regional levels and
- Strengthening the regional CRVS Secretariat at the ECA

16. APAI-CRVS delves on these guiding principles, work processes and monitoring mechanisms of the regional initiative and country-level implementations. This programme document leaves the routine operational issues and activity breakdowns to the medium-term and follow-up plans and focuses on policy directives and programme guidelines that enable policymakers and programme managers to take up visionary leadership roles at

regional and country levels. The programme focuses on addressing major conceptual and programmatic issues and tries to harmonize different interests and programme interventions coming from different actors.

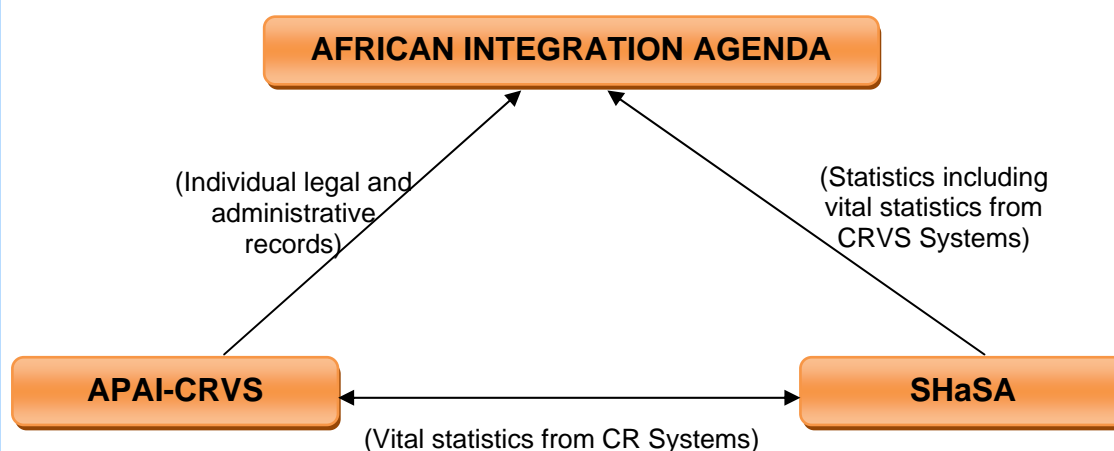
6. Inter-linkages between APAI-CRVS, SHaSA and the African Integration Agenda

17. Complete CRVS systems in African countries, set to be achieved by the APAI-CRVS will play an invaluable role in the achievement of economic, political, social and cultural integration as intended by the African integration agenda. The APAI-CRVS programme makes specific contributions to the integration agenda through its characteristics of setting the basis for good governance.

18. Countries' ability in managing their human capital depends on the public administration's capability in keeping and using records of vital events primarily on births, deaths, marriages and divorces in a systematic, continuous and permanent basis. In the recent past, African government administrations are more than ever opting for a viable technique and approach for improving their civil registration systems that would provide more accurate and dependable evidence and information for justice administration; public services, such as issuance of national identification cards, passports and immigration administration; and updating public databases, like business and electoral databases with the support of information technology (IT) solutions. Furthermore, the decentralization process has brought fresh data and information demands for preparing local government plans, implementing basic social services such as health and education services, and monitoring and reporting of progress made in smaller administrative units.

19. APAI-CRVS shares a common strategic intent with the Strategy on the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) broadly on the achievement of good governance through making comparable, reliable and updated statistical information available regularly and in a timely manner in support of policy and decision-making. The programme's contribution to the African integration agenda, however, extends beyond the provision of reliable vital statistics to the benefits accrued from the individual records of the population as maintained by CRVS systems. This is schematically depicted in Chart 3.

Chart 3. Inter-linkages between APAI-CRVS, SHaSA and the African Integration Agenda



7. Major Components of APAI-CRVS

20. The declarations and resolutions of the Ministers' conferences are the primary policy and programme sources in directing the activities and interventions of the regional programme. Regional statistical forums on CRVS, such as the ASSD and other similar regional and sub-regional events are expected to reinforce the regional programme with additional policy directives, primarily on technical and operational issues.

21. The MTP is expected to be reviewed at the end of each plan period and will constitute the implementation roadmap of the regional programme. National plans and programmes are the bedrocks of the regional programme as they are the final operational areas where results should be demonstrated. As per the provisions of the MTP, each country is expected to prepare a comprehensive and result-oriented CRVS plan based on results of national CRVS assessments. The current MTP is in the initial phase of implementation of APAI-CRVS and will roll out in the coming years.

22. The MTP is developed to be a guiding tool for countries, regional and international organizations in managing interventions and monitoring achievements in CRVS systems in Africa. The initial phase of the Plan covers a duration of five years; from 2010 to 2015, where 2010 is the preparatory year.

The Plan focuses on seven thematic areas of intervention listed below:

- Capacity building
- Innovation and harmonization of techniques and approaches
- Promoting knowledge and sharing good practices
- Strengthening regional and national vital statistics production
- Promoting study and research
- Building partnership, peer-support groups and promoting country ownership and
- Strengthening of the CRVS Secretariat

23. The goal of the Plan is to support African governments in building sustainable and accountable public institutions, and in measuring and monitoring their respective development efforts.

The overall objective of the Plan is twofold:

- i) To improve the capacity of national government administrations in managing the recording and service provision of vital events, and
- ii) To capacitate national vital statistics compiling offices in the production and dissemination of the flow of demographic and health statistics for sub-national/local, national, regional and international consumption

The specific objectives of the Plan are to:

- i) Improve coverage of civil registration in member States
- ii) Improve completeness of birth and death registration in member States
- iii) Improve completeness of marriage and divorce registration in member States
- iv) Improve completeness of birth and death vital statistics in member States
- v) Improve completeness of marriage and divorce vital statistics in member States
- vi) Improve timeliness, quality and use of vital statistics in member States
- vii) Improve accessibility and use of civil registration records in promoting good governance
- viii) Establish integrated population registers/databases

The MTP is based on 10 key strategies listed below:

- Conducting comprehensive assessment of the status of CRVS systems in member States
- Ensuring country ownership and leadership
- Updating and improving methodologies, operational and monitoring mechanisms and tools
- Strengthening collaboration and integration of civil registration and vital statistics organs
- Harmonizing initiatives and approaches
- Promoting public awareness and conducting policy advocacy activities
- Promoting and encouraging data use and quality assurance mechanisms
- Promoting collaboration among users and producers of civil registration information
- Upgrading the status of functional units dealing with CRVS activities
- Building sub-regional, regional and international partnership forums

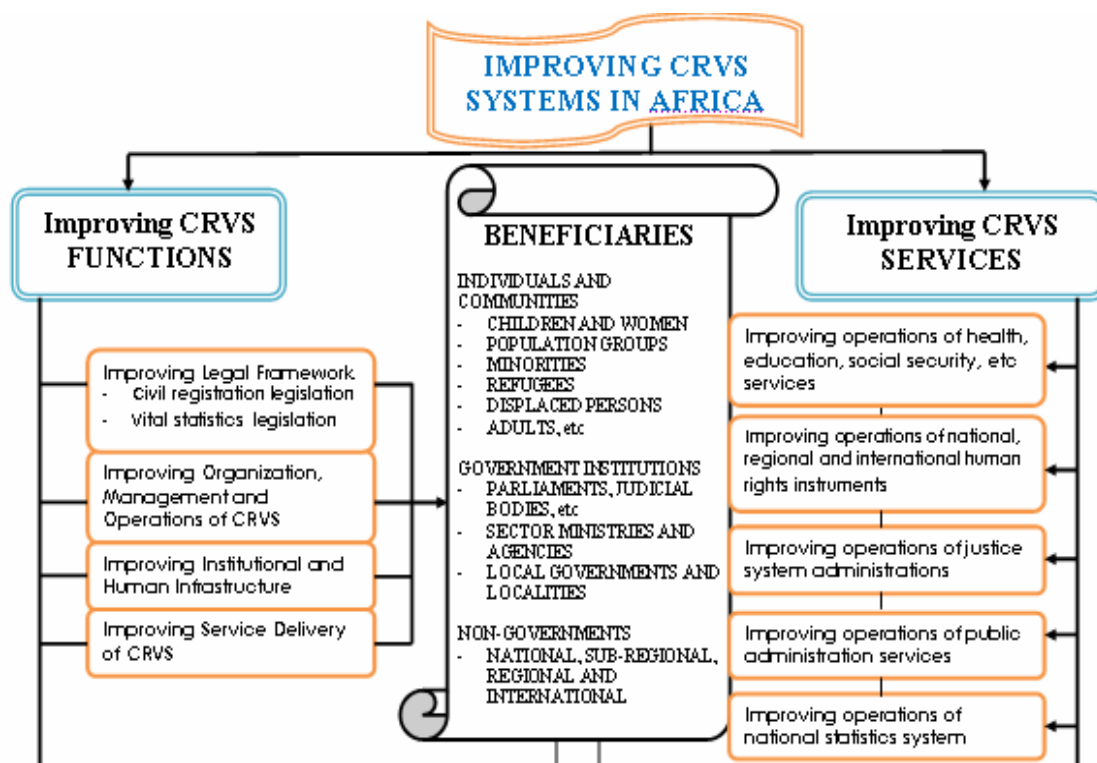
The planning and implementation matrix of the MTP is given in Annex 3. The detailed Plan is available on the main MTP document.

8. Reform and Improvement Processes

24. Improving CRVS systems in Africa would require simultaneous engagement of actors who can be broadly grouped in two categories: those involved in CRVS functions and those using the services of CRVS. The institutions involved in the “CRVS functions” include those that are responsible for the operations of CRVS: primarily the civil registration authorities and the national statistics offices compiling vital statistics. On the other hand, the “CRVS services” category comprises of different sector ministries and offices that use the services of CRVS in delivering various legal, social, administrative and statistical services. The outputs delivered by these two categories of actors are expected to converge to a common goal of addressing the needs of different types of beneficiaries.

25. Chart 4 graphically presents the interrelationships, interdependencies, interactions and linkages of different actors in addressing the multi-sectoral requirements of various beneficiaries from the CRVS systems. On one hand, the improvement of CRVS systems involves aligning the operations of different components of CRVS functions to the needs of different categories of beneficiaries. This involves reforming and improving CRVS legislative frameworks; organization, management and operations; institutional and human infrastructures and making structural changes in the service delivery system. On the other hand, reform and improvement of CRVS calls for engagement of different sector institutions in upgrading their service delivery systems to accept and use the products of the CRVS system, which may include individual records for legal and administrative purposes and also compiled statistics for planning and programme implementation. Hence, the CRVS reform and improvement agenda will require integrated and coordinated actions of different actors in the two categories of engagements. The outcome of such operational inter-linkages and processes will benefit a range of beneficiaries – from individuals across all walks of life to varied government and non-governmental institutions.

Chart 4: Work Processes towards Improved CRVS Systems



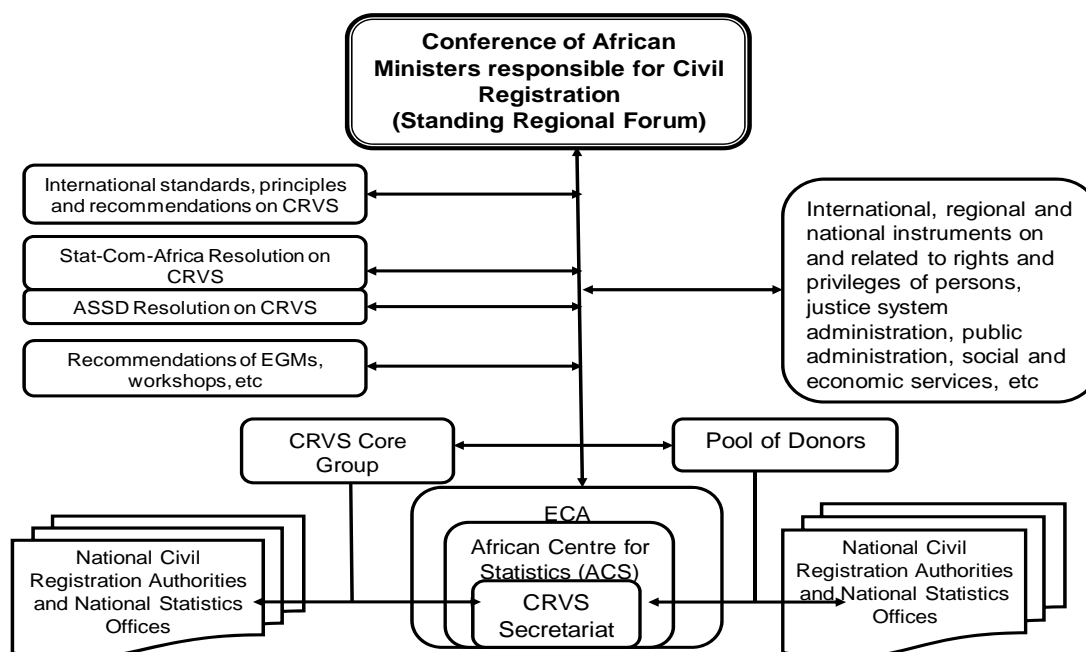
26. The implementation of the work processes described above would require commensurate institutional arrangements both at the regional and country levels. In such operational arrangements, clear delineation of responsibilities of different actors and establishment of systematized procedures are important. In addition, programmatic and institutional interfaces between regional interventions and the operations at the country level are critical in ensuring proper delivery of the different outputs. In all these processes, operating institutions should set stringent procedures in ensuring that the evidences and compiled information produced by the systems meet the requirements of different beneficiaries.

9. Implementation Framework

9.1 Institutional Arrangement

27. Chart 5 graphically depicts the institutional arrangement for implementing APAI-CRVS. As presented in the chart, the Ministerial Conferences will be the source for policy and political guidance in managing regional interventions and country-level operations. The CRVS Secretariat takes the responsibility of coordinating the implementation of the declarations of the two-yearly spaced conferences. The Secretariat facilitates transactions among the different actors at the regional level and liaises with operators at the country level.

Chart 5: Institutional Arrangement for Implementing APAI-CRVS

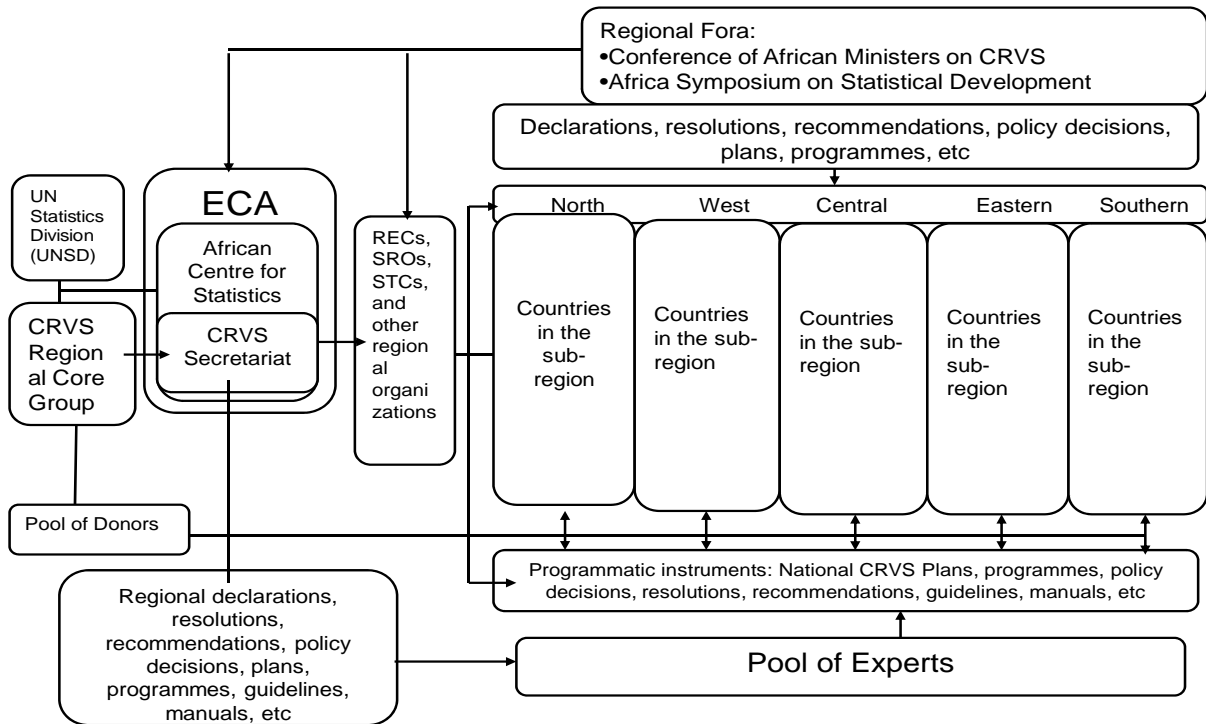


9.2 Implementation Framework and Approaches

28. The APAI-CRVS implementation framework and the tools thereof are derived from the resolutions and recommendations of the Ministerial Conference and various regional forums, including the ASSD on CRVS. Among the tools, the current and consecutive MTPs take a prominent place as they provide the implementation roadmap both at regional and country levels. The APAI-CRVS is designed to be based on a comprehensively mapped implementation framework encompassing existing regional and sub-regional structures, and reflecting the institutional and programmatic requirements of CRVS. A chart showing APAI-CRVS implementation framework is presented as Chart 6. The chart shows the linkages and interactions of different participating institutions and the nature of interventions they would make in terms of policies, programmes, plans etc. at regional, sub-regional and country levels. The CRVS Secretariat, as can be seen from the chart, is represented as the core functioning organ for channeling regional, political, policy and programme initiatives to countries either directly or through sub-regional structures. The primary partnering organizations supporting the CRVS Secretariat are connected either as members of the regional core group or as donors through the pool of donors' forums. The pool of experts to be created is envisaged to be the primary channel in transmitting knowledge and experience from the region to the countries and to play an important role in bridging collaborations among the member States.

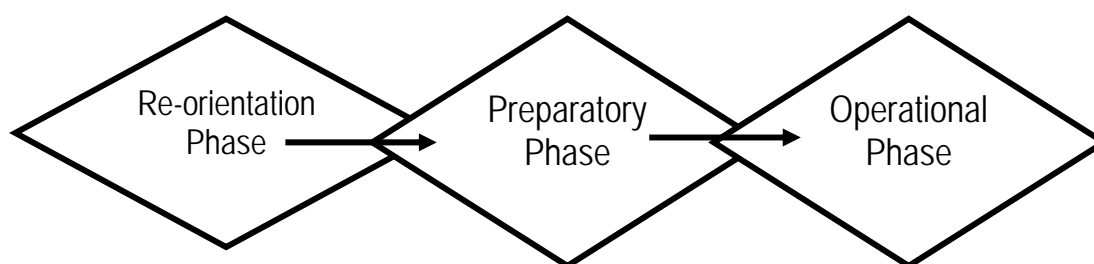
29. The UNSD is shown as representing the UN branch at the headquarters dealing with international standards, principles, recommendations and technical guidelines on CRVS and thus, is considered as an international technical focal point on the subject.

Chart 6: APAI-CRVS – Implementation Framework



30. The APAI-CRVS, as can be seen in Chart 7, has been conceptualized to be implemented in three phases: re-orientation phase, preparatory phase and operational phase. This implementation approach will be applied at regional as well as at country levels. Countries are expected to move from one phase to another as depicted in the chart. They also need to check whether their systems fulfill the requirements of every phase. For example, a country may have reached a completion level of more than 90 per cent and is producing vital statistics from civil registration systems and yet may have a weak service delivery system and, therefore, may have to review the latter and take steps to improve it through the preparatory phase. Each country is expected to devise its plans and programmes in line with this implementation approach. The transition from one phase to the next will require accomplishing or meeting core outputs and deliverables for the earlier phase. These phased-based interventions and activities are expected to provide the means for managing and monitoring the progress of each country towards the regional targets as set in the MTP.

Chart 7: Phased-based Programme Implementation



31. The deliverables and outputs expected to be accomplished in each of the phases at the regional level (as broadly described in Chart 7) will help prepare the countries to not only meet the targets set in the MTP but also to establish and maintain efficient CRVS systems. The re-orientation phase focuses on advocating with the participating institutions and obtaining their commitment in improving CRVS systems. In this phase, implementing institutions are expected to move away from the past project-based approaches and decide to embark on a holistic approach in improving CRVS systems. The preparatory phase at the regional level would focus on initiatives and activities that need to be accomplished so as to prepare the countries to transit to the operational phase. It deals with practical reform measures of systems through a wide range of capacity building activities that are essential pre-requisites for efficient operation of the systems. The operational phase is the third phase in the implementation of the APAI-CRVS that includes implementation of a plan of action, results monitoring, improving efficiency and maintenance of the system. During this phase, each of the countries is expected to show results in terms of moving CRVS to the required completeness level and in delivering efficient services. A regional technical guideline on the requirement and assessment methods of transiting from one phase to the next will be provided in a separate document.

10. Progress in Implementing APAI-CRVS

32. The first crucial meeting that planted the seed for the new approach in CRVS was held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in June 2009. The meeting, which brought together experts from civil registration offices of countries and also vital statistics experts from NSOs, addressed some fundamental bottlenecks that impede improvement of the systems in the region. Following the

recommendations of the meeting, the preparation of an MTP was initiated. The workshop delegated the ECA, AfDB and AUC to lead the regional initiative along with other key development partners to ensure proper implementation and follow up of the recommendations of the workshop.

33. The MTP is currently serving as the CRVS regional operating document for all actors and stakeholders intervening on CRVS in the African region. The programmatic approach looks at the MTP from two angles: regional level intervention and country level operations, with development partners playing a catalytic role at both levels. The programmatic vision of the MTP is to see countries operating their CRVS systems in harmony with international principles and recommendations and regional directives.

34. The regional interventions on CRVS, since the Tanzania workshop, were reviewed against the proposed implementation approach conceptualized under APAI-CRVS above. Table 1 reviews the progress made in the implementation of the programme at the continental level in the three phases described earlier. The re-orientation phase at the regional level has been more or less accomplished through the outcomes of the regional CRVS workshop held in Tanzania and the successful completion of the first Ministerial Conference. However, country-level performances in accomplishing the re-orientation phase will vary depending on a combination of factors, primarily the level of involvement of the country in the current regional initiatives and the level of political commitment by the particular government and focal institutions.

35. At the moment, regional intervention is in the preparatory phase primarily engaging in the implementation of different capacity building interventions as provided in the regional Plan. The outputs from the 7th ASSD and the 2nd Ministerial Conference are expected to move the regional initiative into major preparatory work. The successful completion of these preparatory interventions and activities at regional level pave the road to moving CRVS to the operational phase at the continental level. Similar engagements and activities are expected to be accomplished by each member State in completing the preparation phase at the country level. The results of the CRVS assessment study serve as guiding instruments in assessing the level of progress of each of the countries in terms of transition from one phase to the next.

TABLE 1: CRVS ON THE MOVE IN AFRICA – TRANSITING TO OPERATIONS PHASE

DAR-ES-SALAAM (JUNE 2009) [REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS]	ADDIS ABABA (AUGUST 2010) [CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR CIVIL REGISTRATION]	SOUTH AFRICA (JAN AND SEPT 2012) [7 TH AFRICA SYMPOSIUM ON STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT (ASSD) AND 2 ND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE]		FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS	
		ASSD (JAN 2012)	MCCR (SEPT 2012)	WITHIN THE MEDIUM-TERM FRAMEWORK [UNTIL 2015]	BEYOND 2015
Low awareness and acknowledgment	Ministers and lower-level officials acknowledged	NSO Directors committed to take CRVS as a regional focus area for the coming five years	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
No political commitment	Ministers committed to provide policy and political leadership	NSOs and CRAs engaged in supporting the implementation of the ministers' declaration	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
Lack of country ownership and leadership	Ministerial resolution endorsed calling for country ownership and leadership	NSOs and CRAs taking the lead from vital statistics perspective	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
Technically neglected	Statisticians, demographers and registrars agreed about past neglect and expressed commitment to do more	Statisticians, demographers and registrars engaged in CRVS activities	ASSD to feed the ministers' meeting and provide technical support and leadership	Engage in technical work (use of materials developed at regional and international levels)	
Narrowly conceptualized and lack of clarity on concepts and methodologies	Conceptual and methodological proposals accepted; holistic and harmonized approach advocated	Medium-term CRVS regional Plan developed and being implemented in a broader perspective of CRVS	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Use of technical materials, including conceptual and operational tools in delivering outputs in CRVS systems	
No cooperation and integration between national CRVS organs	Statistics Commission for Africa and ASSD expressed commitment to work as per the initiative	Committed to shift its focus area from population census to CRVS	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Increased and sustained cooperation between NSOs, CRAs and ministries of health	
Uncoordinated external support	Ministers requested partners to align their support to the regional initiative	CRVS Core Group established at regional level inclusive of main actors	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Continuous cooperation and collaboration among current core group members and bring onboard others	
Technical leadership expected from UN HQs	Technical leadership provided by regional organizations and ministers committed to	Regional organizations leading the process	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set	Continue and sustain the leadership role of regional organizations	

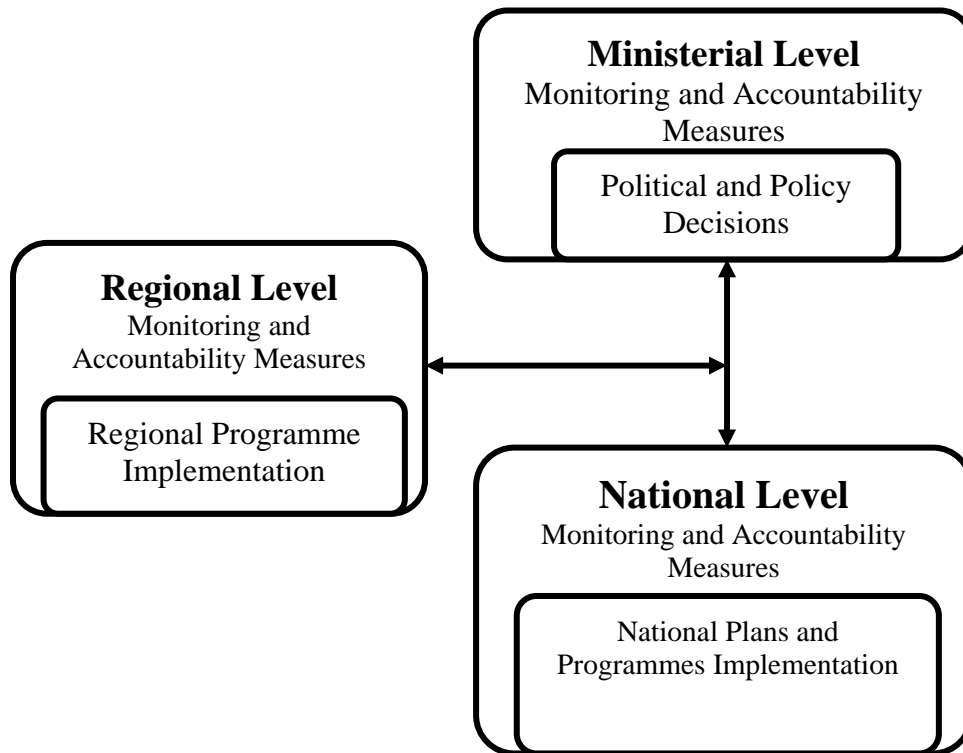
DAR-ES-SALAAM (JUNE 2009) [REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS]	ADDIS ABABA (AUGUST 2010) [CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR CIVIL REGISTRATION]	SOUTH AFRICA (JAN AND SEPT 2012) [7 TH AFRICA SYMPOSIUM ON STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT (ASSD) AND 2 ND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE]		FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS	
		ASSD (JAN 2012)	MCCR (SEPT 2012)	WITHIN THE MEDIUM-TERM FRAMEWORK [UNTIL 2015]	BEYOND 2015
	support		future policy directives		
No innovative ideas from the region	New approaches and methods proposed and implementation on progress and ministers committed to support	NSOs, CRAs and health ministries will be introduced to the new approaches and methods	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Continue implementation of innovative ideas, methodologies and tools	
No regional programme	Ministers endorsed regional medium-term Plan	NSOs, CRAs and health ministries will take responsibilities for implementing the Medium-Term Plan	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
No regional policy forum	Ministerial forum established as standing regional platform	ASSD serving as the regional statistical forum for promoting CRVS	Ministers meet for the second time and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
No regional technical forum	Country experts forum established that prepares meeting of ministers	ASSD serving as regional technical forum	Ministers meet for the second time and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
No regional technical and operational guidelines	Acknowledged on the necessity of regional operational guidelines and ministers committed to support	Preparation of regional operational guidelines in progress	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
No assessment on the status of CRVS	Ministers endorsed conducting comprehensive assessment	Regional assessment on the status of CRVS conducted	Ministers meet in September to review progress and set future policy directives	Operations, work towards sustainability and reviewing achievements	
PHASE I: RE-ORIENTATION PHASE		PHASE II: PREPARATORY PHASE		PHASE III: OPERATIONAL PHASE	

11. Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms

36. Most African countries have been striving to improve their CRVS systems for over half a century now, though the degree of commitment varied across countries. However, these efforts could not bring sustainable change and improvement in the operations of CRVS systems in most of the countries due to serious policy, operational and technical limitations. As presented in the preceding sections, attempts made in the past for improving CRVS systems in Africa were mainly ad hoc in nature and were not based on any sound analysis or assessment of the system. They were not in sync with the existing socio-economic and cultural realities in countries. Pilot projects designed and promoted by international organizations were not supported with comprehensive and integrated technical and operational frameworks. In addition, the initiatives and efforts lacked clear policy and strategic directions. One of the aspects that was lacking was a monitoring mechanism, and even if it existed, it was not supported by rigorous accountability measures at all levels.

37. A clear monitoring and accountability framework for APAI-CRVS has been proposed, with a set of guiding principles and procedures, for different layers of programme implementation, namely, ministerial, regional and national (Chart 8). Monitoring and accountability measures at the ministerial level will focus on the outcome of political and policy decisions made at either regional or country levels. On the other hand, the regional level monitoring and accountability measures will address issues related to performance of the regional programme while the national level will deal with performance of plans and programmes at the country level.

**Chart 8: APAI-CRVS
Monitoring and Accountability Framework**



38. Development of appropriate evidence-based monitoring tools at the three levels of the monitoring and accountability framework is an important component of the programme. The information collected through the regional CRVS assessment study will serve as a base for developing the tools. In order to ensure the flow of information on a continuous and sustainable basis for feeding the monitoring and accountability framework, a country profile monitoring database system is required. Feedback and follow-up systems will be provided for all the monitoring and accountability layers.

12. Evaluation Systems

39. Evaluation of the performance of the APAI-CRVS will be conducted by a prominent and independent expert/agency identified through competitive selection procedures. The evaluation will cover all the components of the functions and services of CRVS systems. The evaluations will be conducted both at the regional level as well as the country level. For the regional level evaluation, standard evaluation tools will be developed by an independent

expert team and will be included as part of the operations of the regional programme. The CRVS Secretariat will develop standard country-level evaluation tools in consultation with country experts. Member States will take the responsibility of evaluating their systems with the technical support of the Secretariat. Regional-level evaluation will be conducted every three years, while at the country level, regular evaluations will be proposed to be conducted every two years.

40. The regional-level evaluation reports should be produced within three months of the completion of field data collection and should be disseminated as widely as possible through electronic as well as print channels. Countries are also expected to publish and disseminate results of their respective evaluation reports and officially submit them to the Secretariat.

Annex 1 – Major sectors and services affected by the incomplete civil registration systems

Absence of comprehensive and complete civil registration systems has various implications on the socio-economic development endeavours of a country. Major sectors and services affected by the incomplete or inadequate nature of civil registration systems include:

i) Public administration services:

- Establishment of identity of individuals (name, date and place of birth, ...)
- Granting of citizenship status
- Implementation of National Identification Systems (NIS)
- Improvement of passport issuance and administration
- Control and administration of immigration cases
- Planning, verification and administration of electoral functions (constituency formation, electoral registration, verification and database updating)

ii) Protection of children and women from abuses and exploitation:

- Establishment of identity of children (right to a name, nationality, parentage, ...)
- Proper management and documentation of adoption cases, recognition, legitimization etc.
- Identification and administration of abandoned/orphaned children (including children who lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS)
- Protection of children from harmful traditional practices (early/child marriage, neglect of children with birth defects, ...)
- Establishment of rights to some benefits (birth grants, child care, family allowances, disability allowances, ...)
- Protection of children from child labour, child soldiering, child trafficking, child prostitution etc.
- Protection of the rights of women during marriage
- Protection of the rights of children and women during dissolution of marriage

iii) Administering civil matters and associated criminal cases in courts:

- Settling court cases on paternity and maternity
- Administering of court cases concerning minors
- Administering juvenile delinquent court cases (including crimes that lead to the death penalty)

- Declaration and termination of absence of persons
- Administering marriage court cases
- Administering divorce court cases
- Testifying a death, specifically criminal cases
- Establishing identity and change of name

iv) Provision of public health and education services:

- Post-natal care of mothers and children including nutrition and follow up of low birth weight children
- Other public health programmes such as provision and follow up of vaccination, children born with defects, physically handicapped children, pre-mature infants not attended by physicians, attending delivery complications, family planning services etc.
- Monitoring and control of infectious diseases including taking measures to find cases of epidemics and all possible contacts for intervention purposes
- Monitoring of school enrolment and evaluation of coverage of universal primary education at all levels

v) Provision of current and continuous health and demographic statistics:

- Provision of current population estimates and projections starting from the smallest administrative unit that is valuable in planning, monitoring and evaluation of various development interventions such as primary health care, education, family planning, nutrition, public housing etc.
- Preparation and use of demographic and health indicators (infant and child mortality, maternal mortality, death rates, fertility indices, life expectancy ...) for all administrative units
- Verification and validation of population and housing census results
- Improving the quality of census and sample survey data
- Establishment and maintenance of national population registers and databases
- Establishment and maintenance of causes of death classification as per the international recommendation (currently ICD-10 classification)

vi) Measurement and monitoring of MDGs:

Building conventional data sources for obtaining data for most of the MDG indicators (for instance, measuring the indicators for achievement of universal primary education, reduction in child mortality, improvements in maternal health, and reductions in prevalence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases)

vii) Provision of epidemiological and other research data inputs:

Availability and use of civil registration records for scientific enquiries in prospective and retrospective longitudinal studies in the areas of health, environment, genealogy etc.

Annex 2 - Declaration of the 1st Ministerial Conference

1. We, African ministers responsible for Civil Registration, meeting for the first time in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13-14 August 2010 at the instance of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC).
2. We 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. Convinced of the importance of civil registration for public policy, good governance, human rights, rights of children 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, 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 Civil Registration and Vital Statistics 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. We 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 departments and ministries at national, sub-regional 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, by allocating adequate human and financial resources for this purpose.
- 8.3 Intensify awareness-raising campaigns on the procedures and importance of CRVS systems to ensure effective functioning of the systems.
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 for 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 enhance or develop appropriate curricula for building capacity and improving 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 14th day of August 2010.

Annex 3 - Planning and Implementation Matrix

Thematic Area	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Activities	Outputs	Risks and Assumptions
<p>Goal: To support African governments to build modern and accountable public administrations and measure and monitor their respective development efforts.</p> <p>Outcome: Improved coverage, completeness and quality of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in African member States</p> <p>Overall Objective: To improve capacities of African governments in managing the recording and service provision of vital events and capacitate national vital statistics compiling offices in the production and dissemination of the flow of demographic and health statistics for national, regional and international consumption</p>					<p>Risks: - Countries in conflict and political unrest - Recovery from global financial crises further delays - CRVS not institutionalized permanently in ECA and AfDB structure or programme - Some UN specialized agencies may take time to align to the new approach - Donors continue uncoordinated interventions</p> <p>Assumptions: - Donors will continue and sustain their support - National governments take CRVS as national priority agenda</p>
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve capacities of national civil registration authorities and NSOs in implementing and managing CRVS operations - To support regional and sub-regional organizations in systematically measuring and monitoring interventions and development results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting comprehensive regional assessment of the status of CRVS systems in member States - Ensuring country ownership and leadership - Updating and improving methodologies, operational and monitoring mechanisms and tools - Strengthening collaboration and integration between CRVS organs - coordinating initiatives and harmonizing approaches 	Activity 1: Conduct regional assessment study	Assessment report produced and disseminated	
			Activity 2: Develop a regional medium-term CRVS Plan	Regional and national CRVS plan and programme documents developed and disseminated	
			Activity 3: Prepare regional guidelines for the development of national plans and programmes for CRVS systems	Regional guidelines document for the development of national plans and programmes developed and disseminated	
			Activity 4: Support countries in the development of national CRVS plans and programmes	Countries will have improved national CRVS plan and programme	
			Activity 5: Prepare a civil registration operation and management manual	CR operation and management manual	

Thematic Area	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Activities	Outputs	Risks and Assumptions
				developed and disseminated	
			Activity 6: Prepare a vital statistics operation and management manual	VS operation and management manual developed and disseminated	
			Activity 7: Prepare regional guidelines on updating and harmonization of civil registration laws	Regional guidelines on CR laws developed and disseminated	
			Activity 8: Prepare regional guidelines on causes of death recording, reporting and classification	Regional manual on causes of death developed and disseminated	
			Activity 9: Prepare regional advocacy and information, education and communication (IEC) operational guidelines	Regional manual on IEC developed and disseminated	
			Activity 10: Prepare regional computerization and information management guideline	Regional guidelines on computerization and database developed and disseminated	
			Activity 11: Develop strategic regional guidelines for management of civil registration backlogs	Regional guidelines on CR backlogs developed and disseminated	
			Activity 12: Support countries in the development of a package of national CRVS operation manuals and guidelines	Countries will have improved CRVS operational manuals and guidelines	
			Activity 13: Conduct cascaded training	Country experts	

Thematic Area	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Activities	Outputs	Risks and Assumptions
			for CRVS country experts	trained in CRVS	
			Activity 14: Conduct orientation meetings for heads of civil registration authorities and NSOs	Heads of civil registration authorities and NSOs trained in CRVS	
			Activity 15: Conduct orientation workshop for public relations officers in national civil registration authorities and institutions compiling vital statistics	National public relations officers oriented in CRVS	
			Activity 16: Develop training materials for short courses and regular programmes	Training materials for short courses and regular programmes developed and applied	
			Activity 17: Develop course programmes at graduate and undergraduate levels	Course programmes for graduate and undergraduate developed and applied	
			Activity 18: Conduct short courses and regular training programmes	Short courses and regular trainings conducted, developed and applied	
			Activity 19: Develop concept note, project document and other necessary preparatory activities for establishing a regional CRVS pooled Fund	Concept note, project document prepared and effected	
			Activity 19.1: Organize consultation meeting with development partners	Consultation meeting conducted	

Thematic Area	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Activities	Outputs	Risks and Assumptions
			Activity 19.2: Organize launching meeting and conduct formal agreements Activity 19.3: Implement and monitor the fund Activity 20: Prepare a regional guideline on how to mobilize resources for CRVS at national level	Formal agreement signed Fund operational Countries efficiency in resource mobilization and use improved	
Innovation and harmonization of techniques and approaches	To improve methodological soundness of techniques and approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updating and improving methodologies, operational and monitoring mechanisms and tools - Strengthening collaboration and integration of CRVS organs - Harmonizing initiatives and approaches - Promoting data use and quality assurance mechanisms - Building sub-regional, regional and international partnership forums 	Activity 21: Develop research agenda on operational and methodological aspects of CRVS systems in Africa Activity 22: Conduct studies on harmonization of techniques and approaches in CRVS systems in Africa Activity 23: Conduct research on innovative methods of improving CRVS operations, management and evaluation Activity 24: Conduct methodological studies and research on improving reporting and compilation of causes of death information	Research agenda developed and research outputs produced Study reports on harmonization of techniques and approaches produced and disseminated Study reports on operation, management and evaluation methods produced and disseminated Methodological study report on causes of death produced and disseminated	Risks: Countries in conflict and political unrest - Recovery from global financial crises further delays - CRVS not institutionalized permanently in ECA and AfDB structure or programme – Some UN specialized agencies may take time to align to the new approach - Donors continue uncoordinated interventions
Promoting knowledge and sharing good practices	To improve technical, operational and management capacity of national institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring country ownership and leadership - Harmonizing initiatives and approaches 	Activity 25: Conduct advocacy and experience sharing workshops at regional and sub-regional levels on improving CRVS systems	Advocacy and experience sharing workshops conducted	Assumptions: - Donors will continue and sustain their support - national governments take CRVS

Thematic Area	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Activities	Outputs	Risks and Assumptions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting data use and quality assurance mechanisms - Building sub-regional, regional and international partnership forums 	Activity 26: Facilitate study tours between countries at regional and sub-regional levels	Study tours arranged and conducted	as national priority agenda
			Activity 27: Strengthen and administer the African CRVS Network - AfCRVSN	AfCRVSN functional	
			Activity 28: Conduct field assessment visits	Field assessment visits conducted	
			Activity 29: Provide technical backstopping to countries	Countries provided with technical support	
Strengthening regional and national vital statistics production	To provide an enabling environment for the production of national vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harmonizing initiatives and approaches- Promoting data use and quality assurance mechanisms - Building sub-regional, regional and international partnership forums 	Activity 30: Support countries in reporting and publication of national vital statistics	Countries supported in reporting and publication	Risks: Countries in conflict and political unrest - Recovery from global financial crises further delays - CRVS not institutionalized permanently in ECA and AfDB structure or programme - Some UN specialized agencies may take time to align to the new approach - Donors continue uncoordinated interventions
			Activity 31: Initiate the production of vital statistics in the African Statistical Yearbook (ASYB)	Vital statistics reports produced in ASYB	
Promoting study and research	To strengthen study and research capacity of national and regional organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting and building analytical capabilities of African countries in the area of vital statistics - Building sub-regional, regional and international partnership forums 	Activity 32: Prepare study and research agenda on the use and application of CRVS information in different areas, primarily in population studies and health disciplines	Research agenda developed and disseminated	
			Activity 33: Sponsor study and research topics as identified in the research agenda	Studies sponsored and reports produced	
Building partnership, peer-support groups and promoting country ownership	To improve and sustain political commitment and take sound policy measures at national and regional levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring country ownership and leadership - Building sub-regional, regional and international 	Activity 34: Organize high-level Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration	African Ministerial Conference on civil registration conducted	

Thematic Area	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Activities	Outputs	Risks and Assumptions
		partnership forums	<p>Activity 35: Prepare concept note on the involvement and responsibilities of sub-regional organizations and economic communities</p> <p>Activity 36: Organize meetings/workshop(s) on the modalities and mechanisms of the implementation of the resolutions of the Conference of Ministers</p> <p>Activity 37: Implement the resolutions and recommendations of the Conferences of African Ministers</p>	<p>Concept note prepared</p> <p>Meetings/ Workshops organized</p> <p>Conferences' resolution implementation on progress</p>	<p>Assumptions: - donors will continue and sustain their support - national governments take CRVS as national priority agenda</p>
Strengthening the African Centre for Statistics of the ECA	To improve the technical and management capacity of regional organizations in providing technical and operational support to member States		Activity 38: Create substantive post at ECA		
			Activity 39.: Recruit and fill posts		
			Activity 40: Recruit consultants		