



CIVIL REGISTRATION & VITAL STATISTICS

The Global Summit

on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

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Moving Forward to 'Make Every Life Count'



World Health
Organization



Communications and advocacy messages

#everylife

1. Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

- Civil registration and vital statistics systems are an essential national resource for the safeguarding of rights and the establishment of evidence for sound public policy.
- Civil registration is the official recognition of the vital events in people's lives: birth, adoption, marriage, divorce and death.
- Civil registration establishes legal identity. This is the first step for obtaining legal documentation essential for participating in society.
- Records of vital events from civil registration are the main source of vital statistics, which cover population, demographic and health statistics essential for both the public and private sectors.

2. Rights

- Well-functioning CRVS systems are fundamental for safeguarding the rights to which every human being is entitled.
- People who are not registered are, in many ways, invisible. They are less likely to benefit from social protection programmes and are more vulnerable to fall victims to exploitation, child labor and human trafficking practices.
- Civil registration and legal documentation are effective means to prevent statelessness.

- Civil registration empowers people by providing the opportunity to own property, claim inheritance and enjoy the most basic every-day activities - from going to school or the doctor, to traveling, finding jobs, and opening bank accounts.
- **Important documents:** *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000).*

3. Statistics

- A well-functioning civil registration system is the most effective and efficient source of vital statistics. Ad-hoc sample surveys and censuses generate useful mortality and fertility data but only the ongoing, routine registration of vital events generates data on a continuous basis and for the whole population.
- Vital statistics on births, deaths and causes of death underpin the measurement of 42 of the 60 MDG indicators.
- Only one quarter of the world's population lives in countries where more than 90% of births and deaths are registered. These are mostly high income countries. In low-income countries, where the need for information is greatest, births and deaths often go unregistered. However, with political will and commitment progress is possible as demonstrated by the examples of several low- and lower-middle income countries with well-functioning systems.
- Vital statistics is a must for responding in a balanced and people-oriented manner to the social, economic and environmental challenges of today and the future.

4. Health

- Timely, accurate and unbiased data are essential to evidence-based global health policy and research. Counting births, deaths and causes of death enable monitoring of progress in health and assessment of the effectiveness of health programmes.
- Civil registration records provide information on births, death and causes of death, allowing the planning of better health systems for the generations to come.
- When properly functioning, civil registration and vital statistics systems are the most reliable and continuous source of data on causes of death.
- Currently, only 34 countries, most of them high-income countries in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Americas representing only 15% of the world's population, produce reliable data on causes of death. A further 85 countries representing 65% of the world population produce lower-quality cause-of-death data.
- In countries that lack registration systems, data gaps, for example on cause-specific mortality, are filled through the use of statistical modeling techniques. The resulting estimates are subject to considerable uncertainty and variation due to the different assumptions and methods used.
- The international community and countries are increasingly committed to improve the registration of births, deaths and causes of death and establish well-functioning health information systems.

5. Good governance and policy

- Vital statistics are a basic requirement for effective policy-making for inclusive growth, sustainable development and targeted interventions, making the best use of resources.
- CRVS systems underpin good governance and safeguard the right to participate in public life.
- CRVS systems are fundamental for disaster preparedness and response.
- The benefits and savings of better policy outweigh the costs of building well-functioning CRVS systems.
- With the application of advanced technology, CRVS systems are increasingly cost-effective.
- Around the world, unregistered people are less likely to experience the benefits of the region's growing prosperity and economic emergence.