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Civil registration and vital statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2014/219. It discusses the critical importance of civil registration and vital statistics as a development imperative, and recognizes the growing momentum for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems at national, regional and global levels. It also outlines regional and international initiatives in providing support to national efforts to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems. The last section of the report provides an overview of recent activities undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in this area.

The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2015/1.



I. Introduction

1. Civil registration is the continuous permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events of the population, such as live births, foetal deaths, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoption, legitimation and recognition, in accordance with the law of each country. Vital statistics constitute the collection of statistics on vital events during the lifetime of a person and relevant characteristics of the events themselves and of the person and persons concerned. Civil registration is the most preferred and ideal source of vital statistics. However, in situations where civil registration is incomplete, other sources, such as population censuses and household sample surveys, and health records are used as interim and provisional sources of vital statistics.

2. Recent years have witnessed a growing recognition of the value of civil registration and vital statistics systems worldwide. Often with firm political commitments, establishing or strengthening the civil registration and vital statistics system has become a priority in an increasing number of countries where such a system may be non-existent or not effective. Concurrently, support for countries to improve the efficiency and completeness of the systems have also surged in the international community and among development partners, notably at the regional level.

3. The present report¹ was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2014/219. It (a) discusses the critical importance of civil registration and vital statistics as a development issue; (b) reviews the emergence of the momentum to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems at national, regional and global levels; (c) outlines the roles of international and regional organizations in support of establishing or improving national civil registration and vital statistics systems; and (d) provides an overview of activities undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in this area.

II. Civil registration and vital statistics: development imperative

4. The benefits of strengthening national civil registration and vital statistics systems in a holistic manner are multifaceted. Because of its strong implications for legal identity, human rights, health of population, and good governance and administration, improvement in the systems is increasingly seen as a development imperative of a country.

5. Civil registration provides the documentary evidence and permanent record for people to establish their legal identity, family relations and civil status, which in turn safeguards a variety of social, economic, cultural, political and human rights that people are entitled to exercise. A legal record, such as a birth certificate, protects people from risks such as statelessness, early marriage and human trafficking, with the possibility of legal recourse. However, millions of people around the world still lack such protections because they have not had their vital events registered and are thus

¹ Substantive contributions were made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO).

absent from official records. Recognizing that this is an important development issue, the report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda of the Secretary-General² underscored that providing legal identity is Government's most basic institutional responsibility and urged the provision of free and universal legal identity.

6. A quality civil registration and vital statistics system also serves many public administration and governance purposes. The administrative records collected through a civil registration system allows the identification of subsets of the population that may require interventions or services, such as health care, education and social protection, as well as humanitarian response in emergency situations. For instance, reliable information on deaths and causes of death can underpin targeted interventions, including evaluating the performance of existing public health policy, and identifying epidemiological trends such as the emergence and prevalence of infectious and non-communicable diseases.

7. Furthermore, the vital statistics derived from a viable civil registration and vital statistics system — with unique benefits of universality in coverage, permanence, continuity and cost-effectiveness over time, compared with other sources of vital statistics — are central to development planning of a country, as they can effectively inform evidence-based policy making and programmes. The vital statistics, notably the number of births, deaths and causes of deaths, can reveal the health of population and the demographic dynamics of a country. Sound estimates of the growth and distribution of populations are essential for decision-makers to better respond to the needs of society through effective policies and programmes.

8. It should be noted that monitoring and assessing a country's progress in achieving internationally agreed development goals has also relied on vital statistics that could be generated from civil registration and vital statistics systems. The Millennium Development Goals contain the goals and targets related to maternal and infant mortality, for which complete data should be derived from civil registration and vital statistics systems. A reliable estimate on national population is also needed as a denominator to calculate many other Millennium Development Goal indicators, including extreme poverty. The lessons learned from monitoring the Millennium Development Goals underscore that improved production of sound statistics as an efficient monitoring and evaluation tool is a priority action.

III. Generating momentum for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems

9. Significant momentum around civil registration and vital statistics has materialized recently owing to the emergence of regional initiatives in Africa,³ Asia and the Pacific,⁴ Latin America and the Caribbean⁵ and Western Asia. Through the

² [A/67/890](#), annex; see the targets of Goal 10: Ensure good governance and effective institutions.

³ The First Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration was held in Addis Ababa in 2010.

⁴ The High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok in 2012.

⁵ The first Latin American Regional Conference on Birth Registration and the Right to Identity was organized in Asuncion in 2007.

regional initiatives, the civil registration, health and statistics communities have come together in international and regional forums for the first time, recognizing the importance of a holistic approach to improving civil registration and vital statistics systems. They have forged significant intergovernmental commitments, such as the institution of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade 2015-2024 and its related regional action framework of goals and targets, and the goal of universal birth registration in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2015. Coupled with this, the formalization of partnerships at the regional level, such as the Brisbane Accord Group in the Pacific, have promoted collaboration and harmonization among development partners, leading to a great impact of technical support at the country level.

10. Increased attention to civil registration and vital statistics systems has also been given in the global initiatives related to women's and children's health. In September 2010, in an effort to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (Goals 4 and 5), the Secretary-General launched the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. It mobilized many commitments and actions that need to be tracked. Recognizing that accountability for financial resources and results is critical to the objectives of the global strategy, at the request of the Secretary-General, the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health was established. The Commission delivered a report entitled "Keeping promises, measuring results",⁶ in which a recommendation states "By 2015, all countries have taken significant steps to establish a system for registration of births, deaths and causes of death, and have well-functioning health information systems that combine data from facilities, administrative sources and surveys". Like many other goals and targets, civil registration and vital statistics systems are recognized for women and children's health as not only important, but also as essential to policy, planning and development.

11. Furthermore, considering financial resources needed to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems, the World Bank and WHO announced in 2014 the Scaling Up Investment Plan for 2015-2024,⁷ with a set of aspirational goals of universal civil registration of births, deaths, marriages and other vital events by 2030. The global plan has three key components: (i) strengthening national civil registration and vital statistics systems; (ii) strengthening international support for civil registration and vital statistics; and (iii) sharing knowledge and building the evidence base for developing civil registration and vital statistics systems. A number of financial mechanisms are considered for investing in country-led cost plan.

12. The ongoing debates on the post-2015 development agenda have given further impetus to the momentum for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems at the global level. In August 2014, the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals submitted its report⁸ to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. The report contained the proposal of a set of sustainable development goals and relevant targets that would be integrated eventually into the post-2015 development agenda. Accordingly, Goal 16 of the proposed

⁶ http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/accountability_commission/Commission_Report_advance_copy.pdf. The report presented 10 ambitious and practical recommendations to fast-track results for women's and children's health and to achieve the goals in the Global Strategy.

⁷ <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/HDN/Health/CRVS%20Scaling-up%20plan%20final%205-28-14web.pdf>.

⁸ [A/68/970](#) and Add.1 and Corr.1.

sustainable development goals explicitly comprises a target of “by 2030 provide legal identity for all, including birth registration”. The proposed sustainable development goals also contain several health-related targets that would conceivably rely on measurement using civil registration and vital statistics systems. In addition, many other goals and targets proposed demand the information on population disaggregated by age and sex, and vulnerable populations in a country, which should be ideally drawn from viable civil registration and vital statistics systems. Another important linkage with the sustainable development goals is that vital statistics from civil registration and vital statistics at the lower administrative level is crucial for monitoring inclusive and sustainable development.

13. Hence, civil registration and vital statistics systems are considered an essential underpinning of the post-2015 development agenda, owing to the increased attention being placed on the importance of legal identity and the potential for civil registration and vital statistics systems to provide robust, reliable and timely statistics, which can be disaggregated in the context of indicator monitoring. The post-2015 development agenda will place particular emphasis on “leaving no one behind”. In a number of countries, being registered is a requirement to be able to obtain those services and entitlements; yet those same people at risk of being left behind may have more difficulty being able to register. While the exact scope and content of the new development agenda is yet to be agreed among the Member States in the fourth quarter of 2015, it is likely that the new set of internationally agreed development goals would add urgency for investing in civil registration and vital statistics systems.

14. It has been argued that new technologies and the improvements in data collection and compilation tools have offered unique opportunities to develop comprehensive and efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems. New technologies may enable the overcoming of the geographical, logistical and other barriers to universal civil registration; allow provision of efficient public services; increase the efficiency of compiling and disseminating vital statistics; allow for more secure storage and production of information; and provide reliable and timely information for evidenced-based planning. It may also facilitate a person’s access to the civil registry both for registration and retrieving documentation. An increasing number of countries are actively pursuing to improve the completeness of registration by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies.⁹ Innovative approaches are also under way to provide access to birth registration at health services facilities and to use mobile phone technology for reporting births outside of health facilities and hard-to-reach areas. Hence, “data revolution” provides an ideal opportunity to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of civil registration and vital statistics and place vital statistics firmly at the forefront of development of statistical systems.

⁹ See “A world that counts: mobilizing the data revolution for sustainable development”, United Nations Secretary-General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (2014).

IV. Towards a viable civil registration and vital statistics system: roles of global and regional organizations

15. In response to the recent efforts by countries to realize complete civil registration and vital statistics systems, international and regional intergovernmental entities have expanded their supports for them over the past years. In particular, the regional organizations have been playing a leading role in strengthening political commitments of countries to improve civil registration and vital statistics systems and spurring global level efforts. The present section outlines the roles of international and regional organizations active in the area of civil registration and vital statistics. As summarized below, a wide range of activities are currently undertaken by various United Nations offices and agencies in a decentralized manner, depending on their mandate and their field of expertise.

United Nations Children's Fund

16. UNICEF supports Governments in the implementation of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁰ This includes guidance on birth registration, and development of good practice to increase birth registration rates. Countries are provided with situation analysis, development of information and communications technology solutions, legislative and policy reform, organizational and operations change, implementation of communications for development actions, stimulating demand for registration, building coalitions and strengthening collaboration. The UNICEF database on birth registration includes data from more than 170 countries spanning over 20 years. UNICEF also supports the collection of data on birth registration through the multiple indicator cluster survey, a household survey programme developed by UNICEF to help countries gather data on the well-being of children and their families. UNICEF also works to improve death registration, by providing guidance and inputs on death registration and verbal autopsies and evaluating completeness of death registration.

United Nations Population Fund

17. UNFPA assists countries in building their capacity for generating population data, including developing or strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems, and using this data to guide policymaking and national development strategies. UNFPA also stands ready to leverage their partnerships with national statistical offices to advance United Nations system action in this area.

United Nations Secretariat

18. There are three offices within the United Nations Secretariat that work for the advancement of civil registration and vital statistics systems. The focus areas of the United Nations Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs are: progress in death registration and mortality statistics; progress in birth registration and fertility statistics; evaluation of completeness of birth and death registration using analytical methods; new innovative approaches and technologies; country studies; and assessments of the availability and accuracy of civil registration and vital statistics at the local level in low-to-middle-income countries.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

19. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for developing guidelines and methodologies for the collection, compilation and dissemination of vital statistics. This includes the production of principles and recommendations for vital statistics systems, as well as technical handbooks. The Division undertakes training workshops on civil registration and vital statistics aimed at increasing knowledge and implementation of contemporary approaches to improving civil registration and production of regular, reliable and accurate vital statistics. The Division also maintains a knowledge base, a collection of methods, practices and other materials related to civil registration and vital statistics, thus providing references for both registrars and statisticians.

20. Launched by the Secretary-General during the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010, Every Woman Every Child is a global movement that mobilizes and intensifies international and national action by Governments, multilaterals, the private sector and civil society to address the major health challenges facing women and children around the world. As part of the Every Woman Every Child movement, the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health mandated that countries would need to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics information systems.

World Bank

21. The World Bank has three areas of work relevant to civil registration and vital statistics: (i) a multi-country statistical capacity-building programme designed to make it easier for clients to access regular World Bank financing for improving statistical capacity. It finances the implementation of national strategies for the development of statistics or similar comprehensive midterm action plans; (ii) multisectoral support to countries for strengthening civil registration and vital statistics and national identity systems through lending operations and technical assistance; and (iii) the Statistics for Results Facility Catalytic Fund, which aims to support national statistical plans, a system-wide approach in statistics at the country level, and improved coordination and partnership between statistics users and statistical producers.

World Health Organization

22. Civil registration and vital statistics data, including causes of death, are considered a critical underpinning for the work of WHO. Such data are used to understand, implement, monitor and evaluate global health development, and are recognized as a cornerstone of country health information and planning. WHO supports civil registration and vital statistics activities as part of its core global statistical programme and maintains a database of country data on mortality (deaths registered and causes of death) time series. WHO also maintains the standard for the International Classification of Diseases, relevant to the collection of mortality data globally, as well as supporting other mortality collection, for example, verbal autopsy standards. WHO has recently published papers on the role of the health sector in strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems, as well as papers on improving mortality statistics and strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems.

Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century

23. The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century aims to promote the better use and production of statistics in the developing world. The Partnership facilitates statistical capacity development, advocates for the integration of reliable data in decision-making and coordinates donor support to statistics towards achieving development goals and poverty reduction in low and middle income countries. An integral part of the Partnership's work is advocacy for mainstreaming key sector statistics into the national strategy for the development of statistics and for important statistical concerns, including on civil registration and vital statistics.

African Development Bank

24. Within the framework of the African Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, the African Development Bank is assisting regional member countries to undertake comprehensive assessment of the civil registration and vital statistics systems. In this respect, the Bank is working in collaboration with other partners to promote a culture of efficient and timely registration in the region and to try to promote national dialogue with Governments and initiate projects that aim to modernize civil registry and identification systems.

Asian Development Bank

25. The Asian Development Bank is a development finance institution whose mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve living conditions and quality of life. It is involved in building capacity of statistical offices and related agencies to produce timely and reliable statistics, including the areas of civil registration and vital statistics, and has been partnering with regional development partners to support various regional activities related to civil registration and vital statistics, such as regional forums, training workshops, assessments of the civil registration and vital statistics systems and support to country initiatives for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in selected countries.

Inter-American Development Bank

26. The Inter-American Development Bank is a regional development bank for Latin America and the Caribbean that is committed to efforts by countries to reduce poverty and inequality. It has an evolving reform agenda that seeks to increase the development impact in the region. Among the areas that the Bank supports are modernization of civil registries and identification, considering these registries to be key to the development of effective public projects and policies. The Bank also carries out applied research in this area, and has published a number of papers pertaining to the implications and importance of legal registries.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe**Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

27. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights provides support, assistance and expertise to OSCE-participating States and civil society to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights and tolerance and non-discrimination. In the field of population registration, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights offers expertise to States for the

development and implementation of administrative and regulatory frameworks for residency and civil registration, with a focus on raising the awareness of policymakers, conducting assessments, developing reform strategies and providing policy advice to authorities.

Organization of American States

28. The Organization of American States brings together all 35 independent States of the Americas and constitutes the main political, juridical and social governmental forum in the hemisphere. Throughout its Universal Civil Identity Programme in the Americas, the organization supports Member States in their efforts to eradicate under-registration and ensure recognition of the right to civil identity for all persons in the region. The organization currently supports hospital birth registration, mobile campaigns in border areas, institutional interoperability and database security, reconstitution of destroyed records, institutional strengthening and horizontal cooperation between civil registries.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

29. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community works to help Pacific Island people achieve sustainable development. The Statistics for Development Division aims to strengthen the capacity of national statistical, social and economic planning agencies to supply data for governance. In particular, it provides strategic and technical support to countries to assist them to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems, and coordinates inter-agency initiatives, including the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan, which is supported by the Brisbane Accord Group. The aims of the Group are to support countries and territories to improve the availability of birth, death and cause of death data at national and regional levels, and to improve investment outcomes. The Division also has a strong focus on strengthening the use of administrative data systems such as civil registration and vital statistics and supporting linkages with other sectors and national statistical systems through the national strategies for the development of statistics.

Economic Commission for Africa

30. ECA is responsible for developing guidelines, methodologies and tools to guide the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in African countries, and it provides technical advisory services to its Member States, in the development of their civil registration and vital statistics systems. ECA also serves as the secretariat of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. The secretariat draws its mandate from the directives issued by African ministers responsible for civil registration, which is now instituted as a permanent forum under the African Union Commission. ECA as secretariat coordinates capacity-building, technical assistance, advocacy and monitoring at the continental and country levels.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

31. ESCAP offers a comprehensive and multilateral platform to promote civil registration and vital statistics as a central development issue, and is working in collaboration with Governments and a regional partnership of organizations to support the development of these systems in countries. Activities include raising

awareness of their significance for inclusive and sustainable development; working with Governments and partners to conduct assessments of these systems; building a regional network of civil registration and vital statistics stakeholders; supporting Governments and partners to align country-level activities; and disseminating knowledge, tools and resources. ESCAP served as the secretariat for the first Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific held in November 2014, which adopted a ministerial declaration, endorsed a regional action framework of regional goals and nationally set targets, and proclaimed the “Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade” for 2015-2024.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

32. ESCWA disseminates comparable national data on registered vital events (births, deaths, marriages and divorces) in the region, with complementary analysis. The production and dissemination of reliable vital statistics being central to optimal planning, ESCWA encourages its member countries in such activities, with a view to strengthening civil registration systems across the region. ESCWA assesses data availability for key indicators in the region and provides technical notes, with the aim of supporting member countries in the production of statistics and indicators that conform to international standards and definitions.

V. Recent activities carried out by the Statistics Division to support the civil registration and vital statistics programme

A. Establishment of the Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Group

33. The formation of a global civil registration and vital statistics group was discussed at a side event of the forty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission. The initial meeting brought together key regional and international stakeholders; all agreed on the need to establish a global mechanism that would enable members to provide coordinated and balanced support to the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in the light of their respective expertise and areas of concern. This mechanism would also enable members to exchange information on their activities in an efficient and timely manner.

34. It was agreed among participants that the main objectives of the group are to (a) converge strategic priorities and mandates towards a holistic approach to civil registration and vital statistics, creating an enabling environment for greater collaboration at the national, regional and global levels; (b) exchange information and coordinate global activities to complement the current positive momentum at the regional and national levels; (c) explore and leverage additional opportunities to accelerate the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems; and (d) advocate for the importance of civil registration and vital statistics as a development imperative.

35. The Statistics Division serves as the secretariat of the Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Group. The Group agreed on holding at least one annual in-person meeting in New York, close to the dates of the Statistical Commission session. Additional meetings are convened as needed or as opportunities arise, to be timed back-to-back with the major global or regional meeting on civil registration and vital

statistics. In addition, virtual meetings and electronic exchanges of e-mails are also identified as suitable options to conduct the work of the Group. Members are international and regional intergovernmental organizations, committed to the advancement of civil registration and vital statistics programmes, represented by senior staff.¹¹

36. Since the initial meeting, the Group has held three meetings. The first meeting was held in Addis Ababa in April 2014, as a side event of the global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Investment Planning Technical Consultation Meeting. The second meeting was held in September 2014 in Seoul, as a side event of the International Identify Management Conference. On that occasion, the Group decided to take stock of the existing materials and publications on civil registration and vital statistics produced by each member. This exercise is currently under way; it aims to reveal where the overlap of technical materials appears and where the gaps in knowledge exist. The third meeting was held in Bangkok in November 2014, on the occasion of the ministerial conference on civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific. The members, among others, reviewed the relevance of civil registration and vital statistics to the ongoing debates on the post-2015 development agenda.

37. During 2014, the Statistics Division designed and constructed the website for the Group, which is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/GlobalCRVS.html>.

B. Introduction of the *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*

38. Subsequent to the report of the Secretary-General on demographic statistics submitted to the Statistical Commission at its forty-fifth session in March 2014,¹² the *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3* underwent official editing and was published in print and electronically in its English version.¹³

39. The Statistics Division is preparing a series of regional and subregional workshops to facilitate the implementation of these principles and recommendations in national statistical systems. The first workshop of this series was organized jointly with ECA, targeting both statisticians and registrars from African English-speaking countries, and was held in Addis Ababa from 2 to 5 December 2014. The Statistics Division, through the Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Group, is in the process of identifying partners at global and regional levels for the purpose of promulgating the revised international statistical standards for civil registration and vital statistics by preparing and conducting regional and subregional workshops in other regions, such as Asia and Latin America.

¹¹ As at October 2014 member organizations included African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, ECA, ESCAP, ESCWA, Every Woman Every Child, Inter-American Development Bank, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Division, UNFPA, Statistics Division, World Bank and World Health Organization.

¹² [E/CN.3/2014/16](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/standmeth/principles/default.htm).

¹³ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XVII.10; available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/standmeth/principles/default.htm>.

40. The release of the third revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System* carries the need to update the accompanying manuals and handbooks relevant to civil registration and vital statistics, such as the *Handbook on Training in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems*¹⁴ or the *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance*.¹⁵ Consequently, the Statistics Division plans on gradually revising the contents of the pertinent manuals in order to offer countries a complete up-to-date set of publications on contemporary guidelines and standards for developing and/or improving civil registration and vital statistics systems worldwide.

C. Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Knowledge Centre

41. In addition to the production of publications on international standards in the field of civil registration and vital statistics, the Statistics Division maintains the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Knowledge Centre (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/default.htm>) to facilitate the global exchange and sharing of knowledge and information on civil registration and vital statistics. The Knowledge Centre documents and disseminates methodological guidelines, research articles and country practices and activities in the area of civil registration and vital statistics. It also provides information on the coverage of both civil registration and vital statistics to the extent possible and available. The Statistics Division will continue to maintain and upgrade this online resource.

V. Summary and conclusions

42. Realizing the multisectoral nature of the civil registration and vital statistics systems and their values to legal identity, human rights, health, good governance and administration, increased attention has been drawn to the systems at national, regional and global levels. Addressing civil registration and vital statistics in a broader development context, recent years saw that there had been many initiatives taken to improve national civil registration and vital statistics systems. A growing number of countries have made firm commitments, often with political will, to establish a system or revamp the existing one, and international and regional organizations have expanded their support to realize national efforts. The ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and on data revolution have given further impetus to seize this unique opportunity for change.

43. Given the growing momentum around civil registration and vital statistics, the Statistics Division is also expanding its activities in the area, among others, by establishing the Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Group, and promoting actively the *Principles and Recommendations on a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, released in 2014.

44. The Statistical Commission is invited to take note of the present report.

¹⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.XVII.10.

¹⁵ Ibid., Sales No. E.98.XVII.11.