



**Fifth Conference of African Ministers Responsible
for Civil Registration**
Lusaka, 17 and 18 October 2019

CRMC5/2019/30

Report of the Fifth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration

Conference theme

*Innovative civil registration and vital statistics
systems: foundation for legal identity management*



APAI-CRVS
Everyone visible in Africa



**Decade for Repositioning
of Civil Registration and
Vital Statistics in Africa
2017-2026**



A.20-01006

I. Introduction

1. The Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration is a biennial standing regional platform that takes place under the auspices of the African Union Commission, pursuant to Decision No. 424 (XIX), adopted at the nineteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union. The Fifth Conference of Ministers was held in Lusaka, Zambia from 14 to 18 October 2019 and was convened by the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank and the Government of the Republic of Zambia.

2. The theme of the Conference was *“Innovative civil registration and vital statistics systems: foundation for legal identity management”*. The main objective of the Conference was to discuss potential holistic and integrated approaches that could be adopted to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems and national identification management mechanisms with a view to closing the identity gap in Africa and accelerating efforts to achieve target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals. To realize that objective, it is critical that the member States are represented at the highest level of policymaking and programme implementation.

3. The conference was split into two parts. First, a three-day expert group meeting took place from 14 to 16 October 2019, prior to the start of the ministerial segment of the Conference. Participants in the expert group meeting engaged in technical deliberations and formulated a number of draft resolutions, recommendations and other technical documents, which were submitted to the ministerial segment of the Conference, held on 17 and 18 October 2019.

II. Attendance

4. The Fifth Conference was attended by ministers, deputy ministers or their designated representatives from the following 30 member States: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Chad, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

5. The Conference was also attended by national experts from the following 53 member States: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

1. Observers

6. The following international, regional and subregional organizations and institutions participated in the expert group meeting and attended the ministerial segment as observers: Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention; Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative; Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems; Global Financing Facility; iCivil Africa; ID4Africa; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21); Plan International; Statistics Norway; Statistics Sweden; The Development Initiative; United

Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Legal Identity Expert Group; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Statistics Division; World Bank; and World Health Organization (WHO).

2. Media

7. The event was covered by both national and international print and electronic media. Some 24 media outlets covered the event.

III. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda

8. The Bureau was elected as follows:

Chair: Zambia (Southern Africa)
First Vice Chair: Kenya (East Africa)
Second Vice Chair: Chad (Central Africa)
Third Vice Chair: Sierra Leone (West Africa)
Rapporteur: Mauritania (North Africa)

9. The following agenda was adopted by the delegates:

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Objectives and expected outcomes of the Conference.
3. Foundations for digital transformation.
4. Civil registration and vital statistics (CVRS) and identity management for durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees.
5. Civil registration as the foundation for legal identity systems.
6. Interim Committee of Registrars General.
7. Initiatives by member States.
8. Statements by partners.
9. Presentation of the draft conclusions and recommendations of the expert group meeting.
10. Date and venue of the Sixth Conference
11. Closing of the Conference

IV. Account of proceedings

A. Opening of the Conference [agenda item 1]

10. In his opening remarks, the Minister of Home Affairs of Zambia, Stephen Kampyongo, welcomed all delegations and underscored the importance of the Conference for the achievement of continental socioeconomic transformation, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

Noting the relevance of the theme of the Conference, he commended all stakeholders for the significant progress that had been achieved since 2009 in the area of civil registration and vital statistics in Africa. He also noted the importance of political commitment for fast-tracking progress within the context of the declaration by the Executive Council of the African Union of the period 2017–2026 as the Decade for repositioning Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CVRS) in Africa’s continental, regional and national development agenda.

11. In his statement, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior of Mauritania and outgoing Chair of the Bureau, Mohamed Ould Soueidatt, provided an overview of the progress that had been achieved in terms of improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa since the Fourth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, which had been held in Nouakchott in 2017. Drawing attention to a number of prevailing challenges, he underscored the relevance of the theme of the Conference and the need for member States to promote system interoperability with a view to capturing all events occurring in the lives of Africans. He concluded by thanking the Government and people of Zambia for the warm welcome and hospitality that had been extended to all delegations.

12. In his remarks, African Development Bank Acting Chief Economist and Vice President for Economic Governance and Knowledge Management, Charles Lufumpa, expressed his appreciation to the Government and people of Zambia for organizing the Conference. He recalled the fundamental mission of the Bank, namely to reduce poverty and inequality in Africa through funding initiatives and by generating knowledge for the successful achievement of Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the Sustainable Development Goals and the High 5 for transforming Africa, endorsed by the Bank as development priorities in 2015. Noting the weakness of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa, he stressed the need to leverage the digital revolution to implement the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (APAI-CRVS). Drawing attention to the significant progress that had already been achieved, he reaffirmed the Bank’s ongoing commitment to supporting member States’ efforts to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems.

13. Addressing the Conference by video link, the Executive Secretary of ECA, Vera Songwe, emphasized that Africa had an identity problem, namely that half the population of the continent had no formal identity. That was particularly true for African women and children. Weak civil registration systems were impeding the continent’s socioeconomic transformation. She underscored the importance of the Conference, which would strengthen efforts to create cohesive societies in which no one was left behind. She encouraged all relevant stakeholders to step up their efforts to build efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems in order to provide a legal identity to all Africans. Underscoring the importance of digitization, she called for greater interoperability among civil registration and national identity systems, which would help address the continent’s identity gap and promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. She concluded her remarks by thanking the Government and people of Zambia for their commitment to improving civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa.

14. In his opening remarks, the Vice Chair of the African Union Commission, Thomas Kwesi Quartey, noted the relevance of the theme of the Conference to the flagship programmes of the African Union and to African efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The establishment of efficient civil registration systems in Africa would strengthen governance, enable individual Africans to enjoy their human and civil rights, and facilitate evidence-based socioeconomic decision-making. Providing legal identity to all citizens would, in particular, enable African children to fully enjoy their rights, including their right to education. The

African Union Commission was committed to that endeavour. He called on all relevant partners to continue supporting member States' efforts to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems. He commended the fruitful collaboration that was taking place among the African Union Commission, ECA and the African Development Bank with a view to establishing the statistical architecture needed to support evidence-based policymaking. He also commended the ongoing efforts to establish the African Union Institute for Statistics, which would open in Tunis on 18 November 2019. In conclusion, he thanked the Government and people of Zambia for their hospitality and for their successful organization of the Conference.

15. In her keynote speech, the Vice President of Zambia and guest of honour at the Conference, Inonge Wina, welcomed participants on behalf of the President of Zambia and expressed her appreciation that Zambia had been chosen to host the Fifth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration. She was confident that the Conference would strengthen efforts to achieve the aspirations, goals and targets of Agenda 2063. Establishing efficient civil registration and vital statistics systems was fundamental for providing legal identity to all citizens, strengthening good governance, promoting political participation and fostering structural transformation. Efforts to bridging the continent's identity gap would promote the achievement of target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals and address entrenched challenges that continued to exacerbate poverty and inequality. In conclusion she thanked the African Union Commission, ECA, the African Development Bank and other partners for their commitment to that endeavour and wished the participants every success in their deliberations and a memorable stay in Lusaka. She then declared the Conference open.

B. Objectives and expected outcomes of the Conference [agenda item 2]

16. A representative of the Conference secretariat gave a brief overview of the objectives of the Fifth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration. She underlined that the main objective of the Conference was to provide strategic and policy guidance on ways to establish holistic, innovative and integrated civil registration, vital statistics and digital identity management systems in order to close the identity gap in Africa and promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, including, in particular, target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Report on progress achieved pursuant to the ministerial declarations

17. The representative of the Conference secretariat outlined the progress made in the implementation of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems over the previous two years and in the light of commitments made by African ministers responsible for civil registration. The experts were briefed on the following matters: the institutionalization of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration; the establishment of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Regional Core Group; collaboration among key actors at national civil registration and vital statistics systems; the digitization of civil registration and vital statistics systems; strengthening death registration and mortality statistics; the generation of vital statistics from civil registration records; supporting countries' efforts to conduct comprehensive assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics systems; and the development of strategic improvement plans and the promotion of knowledge-sharing.

C. Foundations for digital transformation [agenda item 3]

1. Presentation

18. A session on the foundations for digital transformation was organized on the theme “Modernized civil registration systems for the implementation of good digital identity”. The session was chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs of Zambia, Stephen Kampyongo, and the discussion was moderated by the Director of the African Centre for Statistics, ECA, Oliver Chinganya. The panel comprised: the Chief Administrative Secretary at the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya, Patrick Ole Ntutu; the Federal Commissioner at the National Population Commission of Nigeria, Tayo Oyetunji; the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa, Aaron Motsoaledi, and the Minister of Home Affairs of Zambia, Stephen Kampyongo.

2. Discussion

19. In the ensuing panel discussion, participants took stock of the challenges impeding the sound implementation of digitized civil registration and vital statistics systems in member States, and potential solutions to those challenges that were based on the experience of Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia. Participants also discussed how the issuance of a unique identification number to every citizen could facilitate the collection of data in digitized formats and pave the way for paperless record keeping systems. Integrated and holistic approaches to civil registration and vital statistics should be adopted with a view to creating reservoirs of data that could be used in education, banking and other key socioeconomic sectors. The participants further discussed the importance of ensuring the interoperability of civil registration systems with the systems used by the health and education sectors and by private sector financial institutions.

3. Recommendations

20. In the light of the discussions, the following recommendations were made:

(a) Member States should establish integrated civil registration and vital statistics systems that ensure that no child leaves hospital after their birth without being given a unique identifier number to facilitate civil registration, identification, the issuance of a birth certificate and registration in the national population register;

(b) Member States should establish integrated and interoperable civil registration and vital statistics systems to streamline the provision of services across different government and private sector platforms.

(c) Strong political will is needed to ensure that member States provide adequate resources to establish modern, digital civil registration and vital statistics systems.

D. Civil registration and vital statistics (CVRS) and identity management for durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees
[agenda item 4]

1. Presentation

21. The session was chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs of Zambia, Stephen Kampyongo. The session panel comprised: the Deputy Minister for Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Social Cohesion of Burkina Faso, Ms. Sagnon Tou Madiara; the Minister for Peace of Ethiopia, Zeinu Jemal; the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Uganda, Kahinda Otafire; the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization of Mali, Abdoulaye Alkadi; and the Minister of Health of the Gambia, Ahmadou Lamine Samateh.

22. Participants took note of a presentation by UNHCR that underlined the need for integrated civil registration and vital statistics systems that addressed the situation of refugees, including those that remained unregistered, and the problem of statelessness. They also acknowledged the role of UNHCR in the registration of refugees on behalf of host countries.

2. Discussion

23. Participants in the session discussed the role of civil registration, vital statistics systems and identity management in the formulation of policies to address the situation of refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees and ensure their well-being in host countries. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons has increased during the last decade as a result of armed conflicts, insecurity due to terrorism and the impact of climate change. Participants discussed how effective civil registration and vital statistics systems could facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, ensure the registration at birth of all children and prevent statelessness. The experience of UNHCR had shown clearly that building inclusive civil registration and vital statistics systems and adopting effective policies for refugees at the national level were key to ensuring their well-being. Member States were encouraged to adopt innovative approaches in order to ensure that refugees were registered in national registration systems. The need to register all children at birth was also critical and could help ensure respect for their right to education and prevent them from becoming stateless.

3. Recommendations

24. In the light of the discussions, the following recommendations were made:

(a) Member States hosting refugees should amend their legislation to create civil registration and vital statistics systems that formalize the provision of assistance to, and the integration and protection of, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees;

(b) Member States should design small business programmes for refugees to facilitate their socioeconomic integration into their host countries;

(c) Member States should create robust and inclusive identification registration systems that provide for birth registration and the issuance of identity and travel documents to refugees in order to prevent statelessness and facilitate their return to their home countries;

(d) Member States should adopt laws and policies that strengthen existing institutions responsible for civil registration and vital statistics with a view to ensuring timely, mandatory

and free birth registration for all children within their borders, including children who are refugees, migrants or internally displaced persons;

(e) Member States should address the root causes of insecurity and conflicts to reduce and prevent statelessness, promote peace and security and foster inclusive development;

(f) Member States, with the support of the African Union Commission, ECA and the African Development Bank, should allocate greater financial, human and technical resources to initiatives to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems. Resource mobilization should take place in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders and development partners, including from the private sector.

E. Civil registration as the foundation for legal identity systems [agenda item 5]

1. Presentation

25. A session on civil registration as the foundation for legal identity systems was organized around the theme “Integrating civil registration, vital statistics, legal identity management and other systems in the digital era”. The panel comprised: the Deputy Minister for Communication of Ghana, Vincent Sowah Odetei; the Deputy Minister for Planning and Research Development, Ministry of Health of Liberia, Viafee Tulay; the Minister of Internal Affairs of Sierra Leone, Edward Soloku; and the Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage of Zimbabwe, Cain Mathema.

2. Discussion

26. In the ensuing discussion, many participants underscored that civil registration and vital statistics systems established a foundation for the enjoyment of many of the human rights embodied in international instruments. Civil registration and vital statistics systems, together with national identification management systems, were essential for promoting good governance, creating inclusive societies, upholding human rights, delivering key public services and tackling inequalities.

3. Recommendations

27. In the light of the discussions, the following recommendations were made:

(a) Member States should strengthen the effectiveness of their civil registration and vital statistics systems to ensure that relevant protections are extended to all citizens;

(b) Member States should adopt data protection legislation to prevent data manipulation and fraud.

F. Interim Committee of Registrars General [agenda item 6]

28. The Chair of the Interim Committee of Registrars General briefed participants in the session on activities that had been undertaken during the previous two years with a view to establishing the committee of African registrars general, an intergovernmental body that would consider technical and policy issues related to the development of civil registration and vital statistics systems. The new committee would facilitate the development of those systems in collaboration with the APAI-CRVS secretariat and would report on a biannual basis to the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration. Participants

acknowledged the significant efforts exerted on an informal basis by the Interim Committee and urged all relevant stakeholders to establish the committee of African registrars general at the earliest opportunity, as an organ of the African Union Commission, and to formulate a set of draft rules of procedure to govern its activities.

29. Participants in the session were also informed that the Department of Economic Affairs of the African Union Commission was working closely with the African Union Office of Legal Counsel to establish a subcommittee on civil registration within the overall legal framework of the African Union. Ministers requested the Department of Economic Affairs to raise the issue of the proposed subcommittee at the African Union Fourth Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration with a view to accelerating its full operationalization.

G. Initiatives by member States [agenda item 7]

30. Participants in the session took note of the experience, lessons learned and best practices of Zambia, Namibia, Angola and Sao Tome and Principe in the context of building inclusive civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems.

31. The representative of Zambia presented a situational analysis of civil registration and vital statistics that drew on data obtained by means of the country's national civil registration and vital statistics assessment, conducted in 2013 and 2014. Zambia was now using a digital civil registration and vital statistics system, known as "Smart Zambia" to facilitate the inclusion of all citizens in the national population register. The new system facilitated the coordination of all stakeholders engaged in the civil registration and identification process. Zambia was now planning to issue new biometric identity cards to its citizens.

32. The representative of Namibia gave a presentation on successful actions by that country to strengthen civil registration and identity management systems. As part of its e-governance programme, the Namibian Government was rolling out an integrated civil registration and vital statistics system that was now being used by various public authorities. Although the Government managed that process, support was also being provided by the United Nations. In closing, the representative outlined a number of the challenges encountered and the solutions put forward to ensure the interoperability of databases and platforms used by the country's public institutions and ministries.

33. The representative of Angola said that more than 40 per cent of people in that country were still not registered in national civil registration and identity management databases and were therefore unable to obtain a legal identity. Angola had launched a new civil registration and vital statistics strategy, which would strengthen existing registration systems and ensure that all Angolans were given a legal identity by 2020. The new strategy would ensure the registration of all births in the country so that all citizens could play a full part in its socioeconomic development. The representative underscored the importance of awareness-raising campaigns, digitization and the interoperability of platforms used by governmental and private sector institutions in registration and legal identity management.

34. The representative of Sao Tome and Principe briefed the Conference on efforts by that country's Government to ensure that babies were issued birth certificates and that all births were registered. She underlined the importance of a holistic and integrated approach involving all relevant stakeholders and acknowledged the role of development partners in that transformative process.

Recommendations

35. In the light of the discussions, the following recommendations were made:

(a) Member States should ensure that people in rural areas are taught basic information and communications technology skills so that they are able to use digital platforms effectively;

(b) Member States should adopt best practices and take note of lessons learned in the context of efforts to develop national civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(c) Development partners should continue to support member States' efforts to strengthen their civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems.

H. Statements by Partners [agenda item 8]

36. In their respective presentations, representatives of the African Development Bank, UNICEF, WHO, the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, the Global Financing Facility and Plan International reaffirmed their commitment to supporting member States efforts to improve their national civil registration and vital statistics systems, including birth registration mechanisms.

Recommendation

37. In the light of the discussions, member States commended the support provided by partners and called for increased and continued support in order to further improve member States' civil registration, vital statistics and national identity systems.

I. Presentation of the draft conclusions and recommendations of the expert group meeting [agenda item 9]

38. Ministers took note of the report of the expert group meeting and adopted the Ministerial Declaration, with amendments. The Ministerial Declaration, entitled the "Lusaka Declaration", is annexed to the present report.

39. Furthermore, pursuant to a request by member States for an accountability and monitoring system to be established in order to review and monitor the outcomes of the Fifth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, the Chair of Bureau recommended that:

(a) The APAI-CRVS secretariat, in collaboration with the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Regional Core Group, should prepare a matrix and action plan template on the recommendations adopted by the Fifth Conference of Ministers by 30 November 2019.

(b) Member States should select recommendations from the matrix and formulate national action plans to promote their implementation. Those action plans should be submitted to the Conference secretariat by 30 December 2019.

(c) Member States should submit biennial reports to the Conference secretariat on the implementation of their national action plans.

(d) The APAI-CRVS secretariat, in collaboration with the Interim Committee of Registrars General, should report to the Chair of the Bureau every 6 months on progress made

towards implementation of the recommendations adopted at the Fifth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration.

J. Date and venue of the Sixth Conference [agenda item 10]

40. The Fifth Conference of Ministers requested the African Union, in consultation with ECA and the African Development Bank, to make the necessary arrangements for the convening of the Sixth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, to be held in Maputo, Mozambique in October 2021.

K. Closing of the Conference [agenda item 11]

41. A statement of thanks was read by the minister from Sierra Leone on behalf of the ministers, African Union delegates and partners. Conference participants expressed their deep appreciation to Zambia for graciously hosting the Fifth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and acknowledged the ongoing support provided by the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Regional Core Group and other development partners. The African Union Commission was urged to take all necessary steps to ensure the successful establishment of the committee of African registrars general prior to the convening of the Sixth Conference of Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration in 2021.

42. In his closing remarks the Chair of the Bureau thanked all participants for their interventions, which enriched discussions and facilitated the formulation of recommendations. He wished all participants a safe journey back to their respective destinations.

43. The representative of the African Union Commission thanked the Government and people of Zambia for organizing the Conference and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all delegates. He also thanked partners, the management and staff of the conference venue and all others who had worked hard to ensure the successful organization of the conference. The meeting was then declared closed.

Annex

Lusaka Declaration

We, African Union Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, Identity Management, Health, and Information and Technology, gathered in Lusaka, Zambia, on 17 and 18 October 2019 during our fifth conference on the theme “*Innovative civil registration and vital statistics systems: foundation for legal identity management*”:

Conscious of the fact that Africa is a developing Continent desirous of integration and prosperity, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena through a people-centered and inclusive development as provided for in the universal and continental human and people’s rights instruments, AU Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals,

Acknowledging the measures taken by several Member States to strengthen the integrity of identity management systems, including for asylum seekers, refugees and returnees, and IDPs, which contributes to closing the identity gap and improves the availability of disaggregated vital data to facilitate humanitarian and development planning,

Recognizing the importance of the Africa-CDC Programme on Mortality Surveillance and other partners efforts to improve the recording of deaths and cause of death as a public health imperative for countries to monitor progress towards Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where 17 of the health and health-related indicators require a form of mortality measurement based on civil registration system data,

Also recognizing that integrated civil registration and identification systems are essential for promoting good governance, creating inclusive societies, protecting human rights, ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of public services, and tackling inequality; as well as providing an individual with essential legal documents to secure basic human, people’s and civil rights such as the right to a name, identity and nationality, and access to health care, education, employment, and social protection,

Acknowledging that many of the civil registration and identification systems in Africa are fragmented and under-resourced, resulting in a large number of people with no legal means of identification who are excluded from accessing various services to improve their well-being and from meaningful participation in the development process,

Noting that armed conflicts, natural disasters, and human-made disasters in Africa have resulted in the forced displacement of large numbers of our citizens, who lack protection and humanitarian assistance, due to absence of registration services, which affects planning and durable solutions such as return, resettlement, and reintegration to their communities/countries following the cessation of hostilities,

Also noting the provisions of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees in Africa as well as the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, and the 2009 AU Kampala Convention on IDPs and that the legal identity for asylum seekers, refugees and returnees is the primary responsibility of host States and may also be administered by a mandated and recognized international body,

Recalling the Yamoussoukro Declaration from the 3rd Conference of Ministers in charge of CRVS and the Ministerial resolutions requesting development partners to “support development of guidelines and recommendations for maintaining and managing civil registration in conflict and emergency situations as well as special circumstances by making use of experiences from countries having gone through such situations”,

Recognizing the support of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in the improvement of migration statistics in Africa through the AUC-RECs-Statistics Sweden Programme on Capacity Building on Migration Statistics,

Also recognizing the importance of digital transformation for the achievement of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and acknowledging the efforts made by the African Union Commission in collaboration with ECA, AfDB, RECs, World Bank, and other partners in developing a comprehensive Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa to harness the full benefits of digital transformation,

Further recognizing the UN Secretary General’s initiative on digital cooperation to advance global multi-stakeholder dialogue to realize the potential of digital technologies for advancing human well-being while mitigating the risks,

Cognizant of the linkage that civil registration is a foundation for identity management and that the digitalization of CRVS provides a unique ability to eliminate duplication and inefficiency, a cost-effective way to identify individuals while providing greater access to public and private services and better gender inclusion,

Welcoming the opportunity for the modernization of the civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa through technological solutions that aim to build centralized digital civil registries for all vital events to enable wide access, inclusive coverage, and reduced costs through automated systems,

1. *Call upon* AU Member States to effectively implement the 1969 OAU Convention on Specific Aspects of Refugees in Africa, the AU Convention on IDP and other Human Rights Laws with a view to reducing dependency on UNHCR and other partners for protection and assistance on registration of refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees, and particularly children born by single parents;

2. *Urge* AUC to implement the decision on the creation of the sub-committee on CR and submit the necessary documents to the relevant Policy Organs for consideration and adoption;

3. *Encourage* AU Member States to strengthen investment in digitization to facilitate interoperability between identity management systems for refugees and IDPs and the national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems, within a framework of a strong data protection policy, as well as take steps to ensure the widespread recognition of identity documents issued to persons in need of international protection;

4. *Call upon* AU Member States to strengthen the collaboration between national civil registration offices, national statistical offices, health, and legal identity management;

5. *Urge* AU Member States to publish, annually, quality vital statistics from the civil registration records of vital events, including causes of deaths, to guide policy organs in developing strategies for the improvement of CRVS systems, and in support of Agenda 2063,

the 2030 Agenda and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD@25);

6. *Request* AUC and Africa CDC to provide guidance and support to AU Member States to mobilize resources for strengthening mortality surveillance systems and CRVS, and encourage AUC and ECA to continue working with AU Member States on the implementation of the existing programmes, strategies as well as the decade on repositioning CRVS in Africa waiting for operationalization of the Sub-Committee;

7. *Request* AUC and ECA to support countries in harmonizing legislations governing the civil registration and identity management including interoperability of systems by using appropriate information and communication technology assets;

8. *Request* the UN Legal Identity Task Group to scale-up efforts in reducing invisibility in Africa by increasing the number of current pilot countries participating in the UN Legal Identity Agenda, in order for all countries in Africa to benefit from the holistic approach to registration in the shortest time possible, taking into account equitable geographic distribution;

9. *Request* AUC, in collaboration with ECA, AfDB, CRVS Core Group, other partners, and private sector to create a knowledge platform, where AU Member States can share experiences and success stories to strengthen their CRVS and identity management systems, particularly on registration of refugees, returnees, IDPs, and migrants in Africa;

10. *Appeal* to AUC, ECOWAS, IGAD, EAC, and SADC for the full implementation of the AUC-RECs-Statistics Sweden Pilot Programme on Capacity Building on Migration Statistics, request AUC with the support of International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), Statistics Sweden, Statistics Norway, and other relevant international partners to develop a comprehensive programme for the registration of migrants in the civil registration system with the aim to strengthen AU Member States CRVS system to include migrants, build their capacities, and share good practices to produce and disseminate high quality vital data on migrants, and request AUC to lead the resource mobilization for the implementation of the programme;

11. *Urge* AUC, ECA, AfDB, CRVS Core Group, and other partners to support AU Member States to set up sustained capacity-building systems at all levels to improve the production and dissemination of vital statistics from civil registration systems;

12. *Encourage* ECA, in collaboration with AUC, AfDB, CRVS Core Group, and other partners to strengthen its on-line monitoring framework for tracking progress made at national, regional levels regarding civil registration and vital statistics;

13. *Request* AfDB, CRVS Core Group, and other partners to scale-up their technical and financial support to APAI-CRVS programme and AU Member States to strengthen their budget allocation for CRVS and identity management systems;

14. *Request* the AUC, with the support of ECA and other partners, to strengthen and build civil registration and identity management systems that are aligned with international standards and reflecting the specific circumstances and unique social and cultural context of the African continent;

15. *Request* AUC and ECA to conduct a mid-term review of the implementation of the adopted recommendations.
