



Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3: History and General Overview



Principles and Recommendations - History

The original version in 1953

- vital statistics system was defined as including the legal registration, statistical recording and reporting of the occurrence, and collection, compilation, analysis, presentation and distribution of statistics pertaining to vital events, which in turn include live births, deaths, foetal deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, legitimating, recognitions, annulments and legal separations
- essentially civil registration was defined as a part of vital statistics system



Principles and Recommendations - History

The first revision - 1973

- vital statistics system, irrespective of how it is organized, is defined as the total process of (a) collecting by registration, enumeration or indirect estimation, of information on the frequency of occurrence of certain vital events, as well as characteristics of events themselves and of the person(s) concerned, and (b) compiling, analysing, evaluating, presenting and disseminating these data in statistical form
- introducing enumeration and indirect estimation – recognizing the reality of the lack of civil registration in many countries



Principles and Recommendations - History

The second revision - 2001

- vital statistics system as the total process of (a) collecting information by civil registration or enumeration on the frequency of occurrence of specified and defined vital events, as well as relevant characteristics of the event themselves and of the persons or persons concerned, and (b) compiling, processing, analyzing, evaluating, presenting and disseminating these data in statistical form
- omits indirect estimation – as *ad hoc* and temporary methods



Revision rationale

Initiative for revising the current set based on:

- The need to restructure the current principles and recommendations along the lines of distinguishing between vital statistics and its sources
- The need to update and elaborate on
 - Population registers
 - Core topics
 - Health institutions records and causes of death
 - Align with current versions of international classifications and definitions



Revision rationale

Circular dispatched to all national statistical offices earlier this year

- A concept note was attached
- A set of questions – among others on the relevance of international standards for civil registration and vital statistics and whether they need to be revised
- Thirty-five replies were received



Revision rationale

Should the principles and recommendations be reviewed and revised?

“We highly appreciate your initiative to revise the Principles and Recommendation for a Vital Statistics System, because the relevant units of the Armenian National Statistical Service very often use this handbook in practice” – Armenia.

“EUROSTAT welcomes the initiative of UNSD for reviewing the current principles and recommendations for civil registration and vital statistics” – EUROSTAT.

“Your proposal for a review of the current principles and recommendations for civil registration and vital statistics is really appreciable” – Italy.



Revision rationale

Reorganizing the structure of principles and recommendations along the lines of the concept note

“The proposed amendments are appropriate in the overall structure of the recommendations, to differentiate the records that may be complementary to information obtained from civil registration” – Mexico.

“ONS agrees that it is important to distinguish between the data required (vital statistics) and the system of producing those statistics (vital registration, population registers, administrative sources).” – United Kingdom.

“We fully support the need for greater clarity in terms of the differences between civil registration and vital statistics systems and for explanation on the role of civil registration in population registers.” – WHO.



Revision rationale

Importance of civil registration for vital statistics

“I believe the revised principles and recommendations should emphasize the strong comparative advantages of establishment of a robust CRS in order to produce quality vital statistics” – Australia.

“However, we think it is important to recognize the unique role that vital registration plays for the individual (e.g. in recording important life events, providing identity and accessing services)” – United Kingdom.

“We fully support the need for greater clarity in terms of the differences between civil registration and vital statistics systems and for explanation on the role of civil registration in population registers. We hope that in so doing you will also emphasize the legal benefits and human rights aspects of civil registration as was noted in the 2nd revision of the Principles” – WHO.



Revision rationale

Elaborating more on population registers

“It is very important for Armenia to find in the Handbook the clarifications and assignments on the issues related to the formation of interconnected system of population register and the civil status registration” – Armenia.

“Given the strong level of interest amongst some countries in the establishment of population registries, any revision to the *Principles and Recommendations* should clearly outline the strengths and weaknesses/limitations of such registries particularly in terms of delivering quality vital statistics” – Australia.

“We support the idea of giving more importance to the register-based vital statistics and better cooperation with data providers in countries” – Slovenia.



Revision rationale

On quality assurance

“(There is the need for) Presenting methods for evaluating the validity of registers” – Iran, Islamic Republic of.

“Establish the procedures to be used in order to improve the quality of vital statistics, with a special focus in births with low weight, and the statistics related to the mother and child health” - Peru.



Revision rationale

On core topics

“The variable “SEX” needs to be collected in a direct topic for marriages & divorces form/list.” – Malaysia.

“The basic issues presented in the vital statistics, need to be analyzed to see if updates have been, for example, in the case of Mexico, as are marriages between same sex, which impacts the definition of marriage as in the document of principles and recommendations 2001” – Mexico.

“We agree the need to revisit the information that might be considered core. The concept note refers to marital status and should be widened to include civil partnership status and de facto household relationships. One assumes that demographic analysis covers family and household analysis but this is an important area and perhaps should be specifically mentioned” – United Kingdom.



Revision rationale

On the role of health institutions and cause of death statistics

“It is important to see in the Handbook the guidelines for the health care organizations on the issues related to the registration of causes of deaths” – Armenia.

“The cause of death which is not civil registration is a crucial component of national health statistics and also included in vital statistics. Because of this, absolutely, guidelines should include detailed information on causes of death as certifying cause of death, coding and training of doctors etc” – Turkey.

“The concept note also mentions 'providing additional guidance with regard to certifying causes of death, coding and training of those who certify cause of death' ... There maybe merit in the guidelines including references to linking registration data with data from health sources” – United Kingdom.



Revision rationale

On coordination

“It would be helpful if the revised *Principles and Recommendations* included a section that re-affirmed the importance of and best practice in such collaboration in order to deliver quality and timely vital statistics” – Australia.

“In each country, in addition to the statistical offices, it would be essential to consider the contribution of other bodies with responsibilities in the field of vital statistics to the discussion and consultation process.” – Portugal

“Point out the need for the creation of a permanent Committee or an Inter agency Commission for the management of vital statistics management, as an advisory body, with the purpose of strengthening the Civil Registration System and Vital Statistics.” -Peru.



Expert Group Meeting – June 2011

- National, regional and international experts
- 15 countries
- Eurostat, AfDB, PAHO, WHO, UNECA, UNESCAP, UN Population Division
- Presentations and discussions on the publication or related national experiences



Expert Group Meeting – June 2011

Discussions on:

Overall - the needs for revision and the proposed table of contents

Definition and uses of vital statistics

Vital Statistics System

Sources of vital statistics

Civil Registration System

Population register

Use of health services records

Other administrative records

Population censuses and sample surveys

Strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems

Computerization

Evaluating the quality of civil registration information and register-based vital statistics



Expert Group Meeting – June 2011

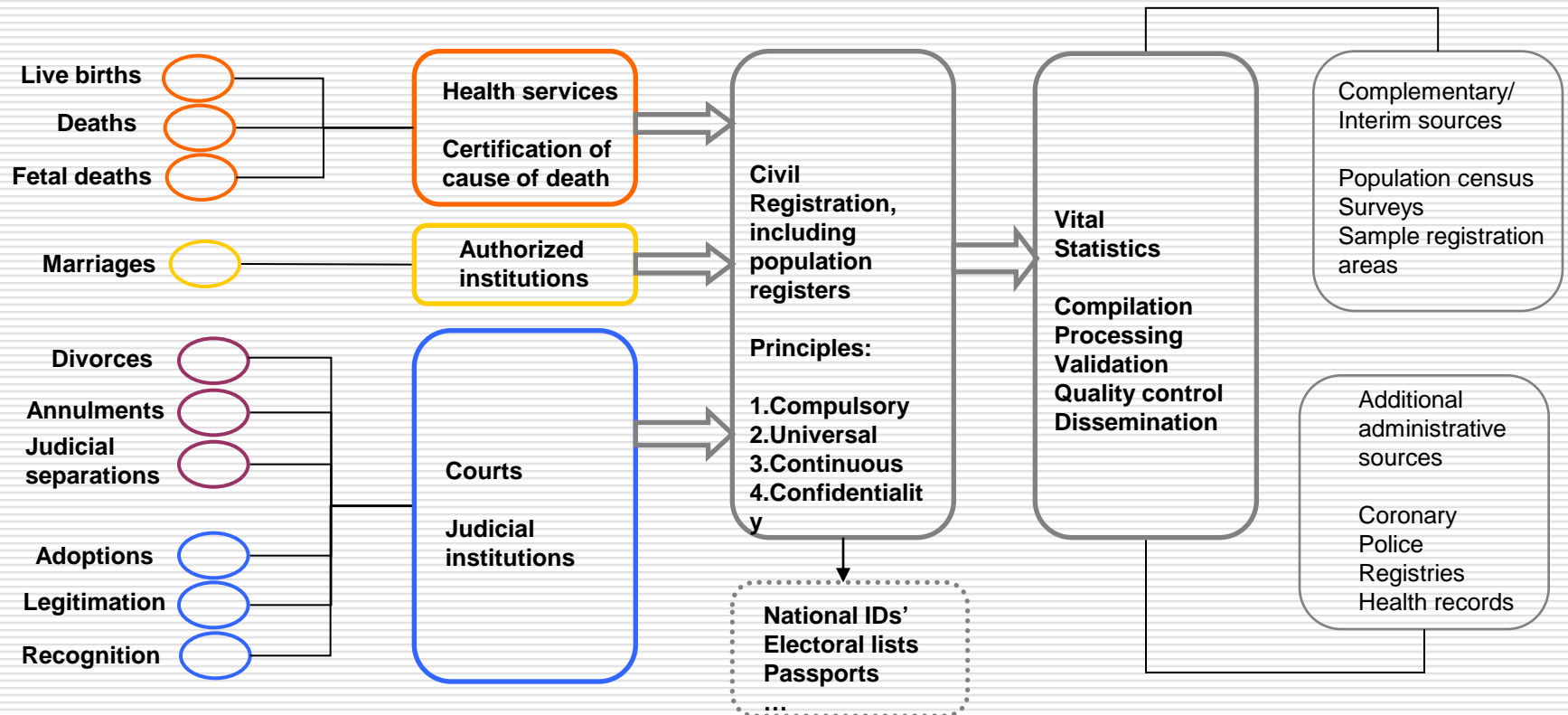
Major recommendations from the EGM:

- Sharpening the distinction between vital statistics and its sources
- Elaborating on population registers
- Re-visiting core topics
- Addressing the role of health institutions within the vital statistics system
- Aligning the principles and recommendations with current international classifications
- Updating and upgrading all the parts with contemporary approaches to producing quality official statistics



Revision 3 – Starting point

Vital Statistics System





Revision 3 – Content

Three parts

- ❑ Part One: The Vital Statistics System
- ❑ Part Two: Sources of Vital Statistics
- ❑ Part Three: Key Elements of the Vital Statistics System

- ❑ Annexes
 - ❑ Recommended tabulations
 - ❑ Index, glossary
 - ❑ References



Revision 3 – Part One: The Vital Statistics System

- ❑ Chapter 1. Definition, concepts and uses of the vital statistics
 - ❑ Definition of vital statistics and vital events for statistical purposes
 - ❑ Uses of vital statistics
- ❑ Chapter 2. Vital statistics system and the guiding principles
 - ❑ Definition of a vital statistics system
 - ❑ Source of vital statistics
 - ❑ Priority in data collection
 - ❑ Principles of the vital statistics system
 - ❑ Organizational structure
 - ❑ Integration, coordination and collaboration
 - ❑ Quality assurance and assessment
 - ❑ Role of in-depth sample surveys



Revision 3 – Part One: The Vital Statistics System

- ❑ Chapter 3. Topics and themes to be covered
 - ❑ Selection
 - ❑ Vital statistics topics and themes derived from civil registration
 - ❑ Vital statistics topics and themes collected by population censuses and household surveys
 - ❑ Definition and specification of topics
- ❑ Chapter 4. Compiling and processing vital statistics
 - ❑ Planning
 - ❑ Coverage
 - ❑ Compilation
 - ❑ Tabulation
- ❑ Chapter 5. Presentation and data dissemination
 - ❑ Types of data dissemination
 - ❑ Broadcasting of data



Revision 3 – Part Two: Sources of Vital Statistics

- ❑ Chapter 1. Introduction
- ❑ Chapter 2. Civil registration
 - ❑ Definition, method and system
 - ❑ The fundamental role of civil registration
 - ❑ Recommended vital events to be registered
 - ❑ Characteristics of the civil registration
 - ❑ Civil registration process
 - ❑ Computerization of civil registration
- ❑ Chapter 3. The use of population registers for vital statistics
- ❑ Chapter 4. The role of health institutions
 - ❑ Informant function
 - ❑ Certification of causes of death



Revision 3 – Part Two: Sources of Vital Statistics

- ❑ Chapter 4. The role of health institutions
 - ❑ Informant function
 - ❑ Certification of causes of death
- ❑ Chapter 5. Population censuses and surveys
 - ❑ Complementary sources for a vital statistics system
 - ❑ Available information on vital events and rates
 - ❑ Techniques for estimation if vital rates and ratios



Revision 3 – Part Three: Key elements

- ❑ Chapter 1. Quality assurance and assessment of civil registration and register-based vital statistics
 - ❑ Basic framework
 - ❑ Quality assessment and assurance standards
 - ❑ Quality assurance
 - ❑ Quality assessment methods
 - ❑ Direct and indirect assessment
 - ❑ Selecting appropriate methods
 - ❑ Chapter 2. Strategies for improving civil registration and vital statistics systems
 - ❑ Engaging high-level politicians
 - ❑ Training and related strategies
 - ❑ Public education
 - ❑ Evaluation
 - ❑ Use of information technology and automation
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Revision 3 – Annexes

- ❑ Annexes
 - ❑ Recommended tabulations
 - ❑ For each core topic
 - ❑ Annotated
 - ❑ Index, glossary
 - ❑ References