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وزارة الداخلية والشؤون الفيدرالية والمصالحة  
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, FEDERAL AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION

# CIVIL REGISTRATION & VITAL STATISTICS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT REPORT



Providing strategic insights & recommendations to  
improve Somalia's CRVS system efficiency & inclusivity

August 2023



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa



**THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA**

**SOMALIA CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL  
STATISTICS SYSTEM**

**Comprehensive Assessment Report**

**August 2023**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AWP	Annual Work Plan
AUC	African Union Commission
AfDB	African Development Bank
BRA	Benadir Regional Administration
CA	Comprehensive Assessment
CRC	Rights of the Child
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
COIA	Commission of Information Accountability for Women's and Children's Health
CR	Civil Registration
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
eCRVS	electronic computer technologies for CRVS
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member State
HMIS	Health Management Information Systems
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
ID	Identification Document
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IND	Immigration and Naturalization Directorate
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MOIFAR	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation
MOIFAD	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization
MOILGR	Ministry of Interior, Local Governments and Reconciliation
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MOIFAD	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization
MOH	Ministry of Health
MCH	Maternal and Child Healthcare
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NCC	National Consultative Council
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, & Environment
PESS	Population Estimation Survey Somalia
RCRC	Red Cross and Red Crescent movements
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
SNBS	Somalia National Bureau of Statistics
SP	Strategic Plan

SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TWG	Technical Working Group
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN	United Nations
UIN	Unique Identification Number
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VS	Vital Statistics
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO-FIC	WHO Family of International Classifications

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## Preface

The civil registration system in Somalia is one of the least developed public services and like in most countries in Africa falls far short of the minimum standard set by the United Nations for the system to be considered reasonably complete. The weak system is attributed to a multitude of challenges mainly arising from more than two decades of internal conflict which affected both the supply side— availability, accessibility, and delivery of services—and the demand side—circumstances under which proof of registration is necessary.

A well-functioning system of registering births, deaths, marriages, and divorces would provide the necessary foundation for establishing a reliable database of individuals, which would improve how well and how fast the government can provide and deliver services to the public. The Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) is an initiative of the African Union, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. A Core Group consisting of UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, and WHO has been providing assistance to this continental initiative which has received widespread political support from all over Africa.

One of the key outcomes from the Durban (South Africa) meeting held 3-7 September 2013, included the decision to undertake country-led comprehensive assessments of CRVS systems and a commitment to integrate strategic planning recommendations resulting from the assessments into government mainstream national plans. Therefore, as a first step to gaining insight into the scale of the problem, a comprehensive assessment of the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in the country by the Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics of the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and was undertaken in conjunction with relevant stakeholders and multi-sector group.

The assessment's major purpose was to identify constraints and bottlenecks in providing quality civil registration services and producing timely and accurate statistics from civil registration records. The comprehensive assessment reviewed the legislative environment of the CRVS; practices in birth and death registration; practices in recording causes of death; resources (human, financial and infrastructure); practices in vital statistics; forms and materials; and advocacy and communication.

The findings will serve as a basis for developing a full-fledged Five-Year National Strategic Plan to revamp and improve the civil registration processes and practices in order to achieve complete registration of all vital events across all regions and levels of administration in the country.

We wish to acknowledge the high level of contribution and valuable inputs of all stakeholders including partner institutions and district civil registration offices representatives from the Federal Member States the Benadir Regional Administration. We extend a special thank you to the leadership of the partner institutions for allowing their senior staff to participate in the exercise for an extended period of time, whenever their expertise was required. Additionally, we appreciate the dedication, hard work, and commitment of the CRVS Department staff for their contributions to the field data collection and preparation of the report. The assessment could not have been completed without substantial contributions, both financial and technical, including the review of various drafts of the report, of UNICEF, and UNECA. Their support is very much appreciated.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics system is fundamental for the any country in the advancement of its policy formulation, development planning, and statistical services. It is also a major foundation for a legal system for establishing the rights and privileges of individuals and providing them social and economic opportunities, claims to inheritance as well as access to financial services.

The civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system in Somalia has been severely impacted by decades of civil war, making it imperative to rebuild the system to ensure its completeness. Unfortunately, an increasing number of births are going unregistered, resulting in a significant portion of the population living and dying without any legal or statistical record of their existence or characteristics. The current registration process is incomplete and haphazard, failing to provide accurate data for estimating population size and growth. This lack of reliable data undermines critical indicators for planning and monitoring development agendas, including the management and delivery of social services. It is therefore crucial to urgently improve the CRVS system in Somalia to ensure that all significant life events are recorded accurately and comprehensively.

Recognizing the importance of CRVS systems for the continent's development, African civil registration ministers adopted a set of resolutions in February 2015 committing their respective governments to modernizing civil registration systems. The Ministers agreed that effective and sustainable development required a thorough understanding of the current state of the civil registration system, which can only be gained through a comprehensive assessment that all nations must conduct<sup>1</sup>.

To that end, Comprehensive Assessment of Somalia's Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system was conducted, to the extent possible, within the framework, principles and guidelines of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS). APAI-CRVS is a Pan-African initiative, created under the policy directives of African Ministers responsible for civil registration, to provide management and programmatic guidance to African countries in the improvement of CRVS systems. The programme is coordinated by a regional CRVS Secretariat based at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and a partnership of the lead Pan-African Organizations – the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations agencies and non- governmental organizations that form the Africa CRVS Core Group.

The assessment was carried out with focus on the following 5 thematic areas: (i) Policy and legal framework for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics; (ii) Practices in Birth and Death Registration; (iii) Practices in Marriage and Divorce Registration; (iv) Recording and Processing of Causes of Deaths; (v) Practices in Vital Statistics. The overall assessment exercise was based on the assessment tool prepared by UQ/WHO as the same tool was previously used in an assessment that conducted in Somalia in 2015. At the same time, the questions were cross-referenced with the UNECA assessment tool and tailored according to Somalia needs. The tool was used to collect data from the FMS functioning CR offices and BRA.

The assessment, led by the CRVS Department of the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation was conducted by a core team composed of the members from government institutions, namely Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Somalia National Bureau of Statistics and National Identification and Registration Authority, the FMS

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<sup>1</sup> The third Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 12-13 February 2015.



(Benadir Regional Administration and the Federal Member States, namely Puntland, Jubaland, South West, Galmudug and Hirshabelle) and BRA CR representatives. The comprehensive assessment aimed to evaluate the current CRVS systems, identify areas of strength and weakness, learn from successes and drawbacks, and provide recommendations on how improvements can be made and sustained. The specific objectives were (i) to review the laws governing the CRVS systems including causes of death; (ii) to identify the strengths and weaknesses in current systems, and learn from them; (iii) to recommend ways to improve weaknesses in accordance with international recommendations; (iv) to explore opportunities that can be used to enhance the CRVS systems; (v) to evaluate the basis of demand and use of civil registration products and services; and (vi) to serve as one of the significant inputs for developing a national CRVS improvement strategic plan.

The findings of the comprehensive assessment are summarized as follows: Somalia continues to have one of the least effective systems in Africa, largely due to its history of civil war and weak institutions and governance structures. The onset of civil war in Somalia in 1991 caused the disintegration of the government and infrastructure, resulting in a breakdown of essential services such as civil registration. Despite efforts to re-establish the CRVS system, pronounced variations in processes and documentations exist on registration processes across different parts of the country. This has led to lack of reliable data, making it challenging to obtain accurate vital statistics to draw informed decisions about resource allocation, development planning and service provisions.

Civil registration is under the mandate of the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation namely the Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. However, liaison and coordination with other ministries are critical in the process of registration. The Ministry of Health will collaborate with health institutions and community health workers to notify births and deaths for registration and ensure medical certification of causes of death in compliance with international standards. On the other hand, the Ministry of Justice will work with the courts to register and certify marriages and divorces.

Although still at its infancy, some remarkable progress has been made on the CRVS system, considering where it started only about 4 years ago. Some of the notable successes since the establishment of the CRVS system include development of National CRVS Policy, establishment of high-level steering committee, collaboration mechanism with existing FMS and BRA civil registration centres, staff training, and document review. However, there is still huge room for improvement in all areas of operation and processes. Strengthening coordination with relevant federal institutions needs to be highly prioritized. Skilled and motivated human resources are critical elements. Lack of budgetary allocations for activities towards achieving complete civil registration system is one of the biggest hurdles facing the federal CRVS department and its counterparts in the FMSs and BRA. Currently proper registration of births and deaths in Somalia is hindered by lack of understanding and awareness of the importance and relevance of registering events. Another challenge is the lack of standardized forms procedures across civil registration centres in the country. An advocacy plan is needed to increase awareness and expand understanding of the importance of birth and death registration.

While there were several recommendations that emerged to improve the civil registration and vital statistics system in the country, two crucial recommendations stand out. These include enactment of the draft legislation with clear provisions governing registration of vital events, as well as an enhanced coordination structure between various agencies involved in the civil registration with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, budgetary considerations and policies guiding these processes.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. CRVS general context

Civil Registration is an administrative system used to record and document vital events during the life course of individuals, such as births, marriages, and deaths. The United Nations defines Civil Registration as the “continuous, permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events (e.g., live births, deaths, foetal deaths, adoptions, marriages, and divorces) and other civil status events “pertaining to the population as provided by decree, law or regulation, in accordance with the legal requirements in each country”<sup>2</sup>. Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international human rights agreements and declarations affirm that everyone has the right to be recognized as a person before the law.

Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>3</sup> state that:

1. Every child shall have, without any discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth, the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the State.
2. Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name
3. Every child has the right to acquire a nationality.

The article 6 of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) recognize "The Right to a Name, Registration at Birth, and to Acquire a Nationality"<sup>4</sup>. International laws and regional legal frameworks all recognize that the child’s registration immediately after birth guarantees the rights from birth to a name, nationality, family relations and all the related privileges. In Islam, Surah Al-Nahl, Verse 72<sup>5</sup> state that:

- The right of the child to a healthy start in life
- The right of the child to a family, kindred, name, property and inheritance
- The right of the child to health care and proper nutrition
- The right of the child to education and the acquisition of skills
- The right of the child to lead a dignified and secure life
- The right of the child to have society and the state play a role in supporting and protecting children’s rights

Child’s registration immediately after birth guarantees the rights from birth to a name, nationality, family relations and all the related privileges. As a legal document, a birth certificate serves to define and protect a person’s human and civil rights in society. United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has documented

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<sup>2</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/crvs/crvs-mgt-E.pdf> page 13

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/54db21734.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://surahquran.com/english-aya-72-sora-16.html>

the importance of registration of births and the impacts of no registration. Further UNICEF identifies birth registration as the first legal recognition of the child (UNICEF 2002). The issuance of a birth certificate is of paramount importance as it will provide a basic legal document that gives identity to a child, and would enhance the child's access to other rights such as the right to health care, nationality, schooling, passport, property ownership, voting, formal employment, or access to banking services.

Birth registration is a first step towards safeguarding individual rights and providing every person with access to justice and social services. Thus, birth registration is not only a fundamental human right, but also key to ensuring the fulfilment of other rights. Birth registration is also an essential part of a functioning civil registration system that produces vital statistics, which are essential for sound government planning and effective use of resources. The [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)](#) target 16.9 calls for the provision of a legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030. Indicator 17.19.2 includes a provision to achieve 100% birth registration and 80% death registration by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 16.9 (By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration) is tracked by the following indicator: Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age. In most countries, the number of children who acquire their right to a legal identity is based on official registration figures, censuses, CRVS, and household surveys.

[Civil registration](#) is the way by which countries keep a continuous and complete record of births, deaths and the marital status of their people and it brings multiple benefits: an individual's right to be counted at both extremes of life is fundamental to social inclusion. In the absence of insurance or inheritance, death registration and certification are often required prerequisites for burial, remarriage, or the resolution of criminal cases. In addition, when deaths go uncounted and the causes of death are not documented, governments cannot design effective public health and other policies or measure their impact.

A vital statistics system, on the other hand, is defined as “the total process of (a) collecting information by civil registration or enumeration on the frequency or occurrence of specified and defined vital events, as well as relevant characteristics of the events themselves and the person or persons concerned, and (b) compiling, processing, analyzing, evaluating, presenting, and disseminating these data in statistical form”.

The preferred, cost effective and most reliable source of vital statistics is a well-functioning civil registration system that collects timely and accurate data on births and deaths, including cause of death. A well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system registers all vital events including births, marriages, divorces, and deaths and issues relevant certificates as proof of such registration and compiles and disseminates vital statistics, including cause of death information. A timely and complete national vital statistic is, therefore, essential for every country. Accurate information on the number of births and deaths and cause of death is crucial for governments to plan and monitor progress in the provision of health services and social development.

The types of vital events registered through the civil registration system in a country are determined by the country's laws and regulations. According to international standards, certain occurrences are vital events for which data must be collected for vital statistics purposes.

Registration of births, deaths and other events needs to be hinged on a solid legal foundation, to ensure that it is done properly, and particularly to reduce the risk of misuse. It is particularly important that sensitive information about individuals is kept confidential and that access to such data is restricted.

## **1.2. Country context**

### *1.2.1. Geography*

Somalia is a country located in the Horn of Africa, with an estimated surface area of 637,657 sq. km. and it has the longest coastline in Africa, stretching over 3,333 km along the Gulf of Aden to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east and south. It borders Djibouti along the north-west, Ethiopia to the west and Kenya to the south-west. Somalia has a tropical hot climate, with little seasonal variations and daily temperatures that vary from 30°C to 40°C. The country experiences low annual rainfall and four seasons: Gu' and Deyr are the rainy seasons and Haga and Jilal are the dry seasons. Over the years, however, changing, unpredictable climate patterns have resulted in recurrent floods and drought experienced across the country.

### *1.2.2. Demography*

Somalia lacks a reliable population data. The first population and housing census for Somalia was conducted in 1975 which published limited results. This was followed by another population census that was conducted from 1985 to 1986 whose results were not released officially as they were thought to contain significant biases, especially over-counting. There was no census carried out since then due to the ongoing conflict in the country until UNFPA, together with the Ministries of Planning, undertook nationwide Population Estimation Survey of Somalia (PESS) for the 18 pre-war regions of Somalia in 2014. The survey estimated the Somali population at 12.3 million, with 51 percent of the population living in urban areas, 23 percent living in rural areas and 26 percent in nomadic areas. Furthermore, according to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, the country had an estimated population of 17.1 million inhabitants in 2021<sup>ii</sup>, with almost half of the population living in urban area<sup>iii</sup>. Urban Growth Rate (2015-2020) was 4.23%.

Though some progress has been observed over the past few years, Somalia still remains one of the riskiest countries for women to give birth and children to be born in. Neonatal mortality and still birth rates of 38.5 per 1000 live births and 35.5 per 1000 total births, respectively, make it the highest under-5 mortality rate in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region<sup>iv</sup>. The Under-five mortality rate in Somalia is 111.8 deaths per 1,000 live births<sup>v</sup>. Somalia ranks 6th globally, with one of the highest maternal mortality rates (MMR) of 692 per 100,000 live births in the world<sup>vi</sup>.

### *1.2.3. Civil Registration Historical Context*

The Civil Registration and Vital statistics (CRVS) system in Somalia has a complex history due to decades of conflict and political instability. Somalia is a nation that has endured far too much suffering as a result of internal conflicts and continuous tribal disputes. Prior to the civil war in 1991, the country had a functioning CRVS system that was established during the colonial era. However, the system was not comprehensive and did not cover the entire population. During the civil war, there was total disruption to government services including the CRVS system which collapsed, thus all archives and public offices were destroyed, leaving the country with no traces of registers, copies, or original documents. Two and a half decades of conflict, concentrated mainly in southern Somalia, have destroyed much of the country's governance capacity and economic infrastructure, including the institutions mandated to provide civil registration or identification.

Notwithstanding, in 2013 efforts were made by the National Statistics Department at the Ministry of Planning to collect and analyze data on population demographics with the support of international partners. In some territories in the country make to reach all communities, and there is a lack of awareness among some populations about the importance of registering vital events. To date, Somalia lacks complete and full coverage of civil registration though in recent years, efforts have been made to rebuild the CRVS system in Somalia.

The old civil registration law for Somalia was adopted in the United Nations' trusteeship under the Italian Administration: Law No. 22. In addition, Somalia did not have a legal framework for the vital statistics which has clear roles and responsibilities for the key actors involved. Somalia established National Statistical Law No. 35 of 18 June 1970 whose primary role and responsibilities were official data collection, information publication and research clearance. This law remained effective until 1990. On 24 February, 2020, Somalia reconstituted that concept into Somali National Bureau of Statistics (SNBS) as an independent government body after nearly three decades of Statistical Law implementation gap. The SNBS Law No. 35 of 24 February 2020 does not overlap responsibilities of the civil registration and vital statistics.

## **1.3. Objectives and scope of the CRVS assessment**

### *1.3.1. Rationale And Purpose for The Assessment*

Strengthening effective civil registration system is one of the key commitments submitted by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation to the Office of the Prime Minister as one of the key government priority programs. The inadequate CRVS system in Somalia is a result of combination of challenges faced by both the supply and demand sides, including the unavailability, inaccessibility, and poor quality of registration services, compounded by the protracted civil war in the country. In addition, the main uses of civil registration records, particularly in the field of governance and preservation of individuals' rights, are not being realized because of the weak civil registration systems.

To achieve a significant and sustainable improvement in CRVS, it is crucial to have a thorough understanding of the current state of civil registration systems. Conducting an assessment would enable a comprehensive evaluation of current practices and levels of performance, providing a basis for the development of holistic strategies to achieve an effective and efficient CRVS system. The Ministry's CRVS Department 2023 Annual Work Plan envisages bringing about a considerable improvement in the vital registration through the development of a five-year strategic plan.

Furthermore, the comprehensive assessment of the CRVS system is a direct response to the declaration of the Second Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration in September 2012. The Conference urged all African countries to undertake in-depth assessment of the state of their national civil registration systems and develop a strategic and action plans for improving CRVS. An assessment of Somalia's civil registration and vital statistics systems was, therefore, commissioned by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and has been conducted in conjunction with core stakeholders, i.e. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Justice, National Bureau of Statistics, National Identification & Registration Authority with support from development partners. By conducting a national comprehensive assessment, the current systems and operations were reviewed, and their strengths and weaknesses were analyzed to identify areas for improvement. This process will enable the country to create targeted strategies and interventions that will transform the existing CRVS systems into a well-functioning system. Ultimately, this will ensure that all vital events occurring in Somalia are registered within the legal time limit and reported accurately.

### *1.3.2. Objectives*

The primary goal of the assessment was to provide evidence to prioritize interventions for strengthening national CRVS systems, guide policy development, planning, and resource allocation. The specific objectives for conducting a comprehensive assessment include:

- i. to review laws on CRVS and their impact on coverage and completeness of registration.
- ii. to identify the strengths and weaknesses in current systems;
- iii. to identify ways through which weaknesses can be improved in line with international standards.
- iv. to review the bottlenecks in the registration process of the vital events
- v. to explore opportunities that can be used to strengthen the CRVS system;
- vi. to evaluate the basis of demand and use of civil registration product and services; and
- vii. to serve as one of the major inputs for developing a National CRVS Strategic Plan.

### *1.3.3. Scope of the Assessment*

The collection and registration of vital events such as live birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment of marriage, judicial separation of marriage, adoption, legitimation, and recognition are recommended by the United Nations for civil registration and vital statistics purposes, (United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Principles and recommendations for a vital statistics system, rev. 3. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; 2014. p. 3–4.). However, not every country records all vital events recommended by the UN. The United Nations recommends that 10 types of vital events should be recorded in a country's civil

registration system. However, not all countries register all of these events while other countries register some additional types of vital events. In Somalia's proposed draft CRVS Bill, the following 8 types of vital events have been highlighted:

1. Birth—a live born infant.
2. Death—the disappearance of life
3. Foetal Death—a dead born fetus
4. Marriage—the legal relationship of a husband and wife
5. Divorce—the legal termination of a marriage with the right of the parties to remarry.
6. Annulment of Marriage—the invalidation or voiding of marriage
7. Judicial Separation of Marriage—the parting of married persons without the right to remarry.
8. Adoption—the legal taking of a child of other parents as one's own

The African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration have recommended the recording of these four vital events. Therefore, to assist in the establishment of the vital events registration system, priority is given to recording births, marriages, divorces, and deaths. Therefore, in line with these recommendations, the scope of the CRVS improvement process has been set to address births, deaths, marriages, divorces.

#### **1.4. Assessment methodology**

The methodology used during the rapid and comprehensive assessments included reviews of the previous CRVS assessments in Somalia, review of the existing CRVS legal frameworks of the country, technical discussions with the TWG, and state-level technical engagements with CRVS stakeholders and relevant actors involved in civil registration using two WHO Tools, viz., (a) Rapid assessment of national civil registration and vital statistics systems; and (b) Comprehensive Assessment of national civil registration and vital statistics systems. The comprehensive assessment has been built on a previous assessment that was conducted in 2015 by the Ministry of Health using UQ/WHO tool, while at the same time cross-referencing with assessment tool developed by the APAI-CRVS Secretariat. The essential activities included assembling as much documentation and materials as possible as input into the desk review, questionnaires, and interviews of civil servants in the CRVS centers. and stakeholders at national and district levels.

##### *1.4.1. Planning and priority setting*

The methodology used during the rapid and comprehensive assessments included reviews of the previous CRVS assessments in Somalia, review of the existing CRVS legal frameworks of the country, technical discussions with the TWG, and state-level technical engagements with CRVS stakeholders and relevant actors involved in civil registration using two WHO Tools, viz., (a) Rapid assessment of national civil registration and vital statistics systems; and (b) Comprehensive Assessment of national civil registration and vital statistics systems. The comprehensive assessment was built on previous assessment conducted in 2015 using UQ/WHO tool. The assessment tool developed by the APAI-CRVS Secretariat was also used as a cross-reference. The essential activities included assembling as much documentation and materials as possible as input into the desk review

and conducting district operations assessment. An assessment guideline contextualized to the country's situation, terms of reference, and set questions, and areas for investigation for each task team. The methodology adopted to collect information included desk reviews, questionnaires, and interviews of civil servants in the CRVS centres. and stakeholders at national and district levels.

The assessment centred on the following 5 themes:

- Legal framework requirements for the CRVS, and the scope and challenges of its operations, including service delivery.
- Birth registration.
- Death registration and causes of death.
- Marriage and divorce registration; and
- Vital statistics

#### *1.4.2. Orientations of CRVS Technical Teams and Assignments of Tasks*

The consultant provided training to familiarize the team with the comprehensive assessment process, recommended tools, assessment types, and necessary procedures for strategic plan development. The consultant also suggested literature and reading materials to enhance their understanding of a complete and effective CRVS system. Group exercises on conducting SWOT, PESTEL, and stakeholder analyses were assigned to the team, followed by brainstorming sessions conducted both physically and virtually.

#### *1.4.3. Familiarizing and piloting assessment tools*

To kick start the process, the Director of the CRVS department formed a technical team from the department to work with the CRVS consultant. The consultant facilitated an induction workshop on the strategic plan development with the CRVS technical team on an insight of the basic tools to be used during the assessment processes. The assessment team members were familiarized with the recommended UQ/WHO rapid and comprehensive assessment tools as well as the APAI-CRVS assessment tool. The purpose of piloting the assessment tool was to ensure all team members are very familiar with the use of the tools. These tools also included SWOT, PESTEL and stakeholder analyses. At the end of the induction workshop, tasks have been assigned to the team members.

Following the induction meeting with the technical team, the CRVS strategic plan development was formally launched at the national CRVS technical committee workshop, which involved CRVS focal points from the FMSs and BRA, federal Ministries of Health, Religious Affairs, Justice, Education, National Statistics Bureau, IND, and other stakeholders.

#### *1.4.4. Training Workshop on CRVS Comprehensive Assessment*

The Consultant presented an overview of the comprehensive assessment process and workplan to the CRVS technical team as part of the strategic plan development. To prepare the assessment teams for their task, an orientation and training workshop was conducted in Mogadishu, which equipped them with necessary tools, methodologies, and guidelines. This workshop laid a crucial foundation for enabling task teams to conduct a thorough evaluation of CRVS systems.



The orientation and training workshop held in Mogadishu equipped the assessment teams with the necessary tools, methodologies, and guidelines to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the CRVS system. The training covered various topics such as civil registration policy and legal framework, vital statistics, registration of births, deaths, marriages, and divorces, causes-of-death data collection and analysis, assessment modalities, and review timelines. In addition, the workshop focused on training participants on the legal framework, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms involved in undertaking the assessment. The training was delivered through presentations by facilitators and small group discussions, allowing participants to share their experiences and knowledge.

The workshop emphasized the significance of vital statistics as a component of the national statistics base and internationally recommended principles and standards for vital statistics collection, processing, and transmission. Overall, the workshop laid a crucial foundation for enabling task teams to conduct a thorough evaluation of CRVS systems.

#### 1.4.5. Task Teams

The comprehensive assessment of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics utilized both the UQ/WHO and APAI-CRVS guidelines. The technical team worked closely with the district registrars and sectoral representatives and stakeholders responsible for various components of the system and those who benefit from the CVRS outputs like education, health, statistics, and national identification.

To facilitate effective and efficient conducting of the comprehensive assessment, the teams were asked to concentrate on the following five thematic areas:

**Table 1: Participants for discussions by thematic areas**

Thematic areas	Participants
Legislative and Policy environment for Civil Registration	Desk research on laws, regulations and policies related to CRVS by Ministry’ legal advisors, focal points from Ministry of Justice
Operations and practices in birth registration	Ministry of Interior legal department, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Religious Affairs, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning, FMS and BRA District Registration Officers and CRVS directors
Operations and practices in marriage and divorce registration	Ministry of Interior legal department, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Religious Affairs, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning, FMS and BRA District Registration Officers and CRVS directors
Recording and processing of deaths and cause of death	Ministry of Interior legal department, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Religious Affairs, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning, FMS, and BRA District Registration Officers and CRVS directors
Operations and practices in vital statistics	Ministry of Interior legal department, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Religious Affairs, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning, FMS and BRA District Registration Officers and CRVS directors

#### ***1.4.6. Desk Review***

The CRVS Core Team initiated the assessment process in May 2023 by gathering information on the system's structure and operations, including legal frameworks of institutions involved in CRVS and those whose functions are impacted by an efficient CRVS system. A thorough literature review was conducted for each thematic area before engaging the federal and FMS institutions and stakeholders. Relevant policies, legislation, reports, and other documents from government and other sources were examined for useful information. The CRVS CA tool provided a set of questions that were answered during the exercise, with some issues requiring further investigation or verification through consultations with regional representatives, registrars and stakeholders. The desk review exercise involved studying available literature, answering relevant questions using the assessment tool, plotting organizational charts and process flows as required, and compiling a list of specific issues for investigation during consultations with field representatives.

In addition, the team were able to conduct a desk review process on resources (human, infrastructural and financial) for civil registrations, types of birth and death forms at district level. A further comprehensive desk review was undertaken by the national consultant to generate information that would help contextualize the findings from the field. Among the key reviewed list included:

- Previous rapid assessments findings
- Previous comprehensive assessment findings
- Somalia's old's laws and regulations for civil registration
- International Laws, Regulations, principles, and declarations about CRVS
- Regional declarations about CRVS
- Existing birth registration forms

#### ***1.4.7. Application of the Assessment Tool***

A training workshop was arranged for the Task Teams to help them prepare for the task. During the workshop, the assessment methodology was thoroughly addressed, and the proposed Assessment Tool by UQ/WHO and APAI-CRVS was reviewed and tailored to the Somali context. With feedback from Task Team members, a roadmap for performing the regional assessment was finalized. Furthermore, as part of the practical assessment guidelines prepared by the consultant for this purpose, the teams were given clear and explicit terms of reference. Guidelines were prepared to ensure the proper methods of gathering information.

It was important to ensure that as much information as possible was gathered, including input from the relevant institutions and other stakeholders and to the extent possible all applicable questions were answered.

The task teams used an assessment tool developed by UQ/WHO while cross-referencing APAI-CRVS assessment tool and adapted to national context to collect information that would help identify areas of concern in the existing system. The tools contained questions / issues for investigation, covering the following thematic areas:

1. Legal framework requirements for the CRVS, and the scope and challenges of its operations, including service delivery.
2. Birth registration.
3. Death registration and causes of death.
4. Marriage and divorce registration; and
5. Vital statistics

#### *1.4.8. Information from Field Registration Offices*

Owing to logistical constraints, it was not possible to make visits to the different district civil registration centers in the country. However, the CRVS focal points and district registrars from the functional registration centres from Jubaland, Southwest State, Galmudug, Hirshabelle and Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) were invited and participated in the assessment exercises held in Mogadishu. The technical teams collected as much detail as possible data from the five Federal Member States (FMSs) and Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) focusing on the thematic areas of the assessment. The goal was to study how civil registration processes of vital events take place and how causes of death are captured. Further consultations were conducted through online meetings. In addition, key representatives from federal Ministries of Health, Religious Affairs, Justice, Education, National Statistics Bureau, Immigration Authority, and other stakeholders were interviewed to collect information on the civil registration system's capacity, effectiveness, bottlenecks, and areas for improvement throughout the country.

These exercises were useful as they also provided platform for group discussions, exchange of information and sharing unique experiences. The assessment involved focus group discussions and employed various methodologies, including purposively assigned individuals and specially designed questionnaires and in-depth interviews to gather information on registrants and birth/death registration processes. The selection of questions aimed to achieve a range of positive / enabling and negative / inhibiting situations governing civil registration in all the functioning registration centres in the country.

The focus was on qualitative data to identify obstacles hindering complete civil registration. Overall, the evaluation aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding and insights into the state of civil registration in the country and will inform the development of a comprehensive National CRVS Improvement Plan to strengthen civil registration systems across the country and will also serve as a benchmark for future assessments.

#### *1.4.9. Stakeholders' Analysis*

The success of the CRVS system is dependent on stakeholders, who can either be positively or negatively impacted by the system or affect its outcome. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a stakeholder analysis to prioritize their involvement in the system's development. This involves creating a stakeholder register with information such as their name, designation, agency, role, type of stakeholder, communication type, expectations, interests, and influence on project outcome. The prioritization is based on their importance and influence and is categorized in a matrix that identifies the most important and influential stakeholders in the upper left-hand corner and the least important and influential stakeholders in the lower right-hand corner. The most important and influential group should be consulted first, while the least important and influential group should not be given special consideration.

**Table 2: CRVS Stakeholder Analysis**

<i>High influence, low importance</i>	<i>High influence, high importance</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ministry of Youth and Sports of Somalia</li> <li>2. Ministry of Telecommunication, post, and IT</li> <li>3. Ministry of environment &amp; climate changes</li> <li>4. Ministry of Public Works</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Presidency Office</li> <li>2. The Parliament: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House of the People</li> <li>• Committees</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Prime Minister's office</li> <li>4. Ministry of Finance</li> <li>5. Ministry of Planning</li> <li>6. MOIFAR/MOIFAD/MOILGR</li> <li>7. Ministry of Health</li> <li>8. National Identification &amp; Registration Agency (NIRA)</li> <li>9. Ministry of Justice/Constitutional Affairs</li> <li>10. Somali National Bureau of Statistics (SNBS)</li> <li>11. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation</li> <li>12. Local governments/district administrations</li> <li>13. National Commission for Refugees and IDPs</li> <li>14. Immigration and Naturalization Directorate</li> <li>15. Medical associations</li> <li>16. National Civil Service Commission</li> <li>17. Courts</li> <li>18. National Disability Agency</li> <li>19. The media</li> <li>20. Citizens</li> </ol>
<i>Low influence, low importance</i>	<i>Low influence, high importance</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intergovernmental Academy of Somali Language</li> <li>2. Ministry of commerce</li> <li>3. Somali Academy of Science, Culture &amp; Arts</li> <li>4. Somalia Chambers of commerce</li> <li>5. Federal/State Revenue Authorities</li> <li>6. Youth Associations/Groups</li> <li>7. Children Rights Organizations</li> <li>8. Women Associations/Groups</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Somali Disaster Management Agency</li> <li>2. Ministry of Labour &amp; Social Affairs</li> <li>3. Ministry of Defence</li> <li>4. Somali Police Force</li> <li>5. Somali National Army</li> <li>6. National Intelligence and Security Agency</li> <li>7. Ministry of Education</li> <li>8. Local Government Institute</li> <li>9. National Independent Electoral Commission</li> </ol>

9. Charity based organizations. 10. Civil Society organizations 11. Human Rights promotion groups 12. Schools and Universities 13. Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation 14. Ministry of Livestock, Forest, and Range	10. Local/International Banks 11. Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development/Family Affairs 12. Public notaries 13. UN Agencies, INGOs and Development Partners
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It is crucial to conduct a situation analysis in order to examine the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors (PESTLE) that could impact the performance of CRVS systems and determine appropriate strategies. Additionally, the analysis should evaluate both internal and external forces that may affect the opportunities and threats of the CRVS systems.

**Table 3: Opportunities and Threat Analysis for Somalia’s CRVS systems**

Factors	Opportunities	Threats	
<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a strong political support at federal, state, and regional levels and conducive legal and policy environments.</li> <li>• There is a good will among CRVS stakeholders to strengthen the intraoffice collaborations, cooperation, coordination, and support.</li> <li>• Increased recognition of the importance of CRVS system at national, state, regional and district levels as an essential underpinning development agenda.</li> <li>• Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day globally and regionally recognized every year on August 10.</li> <li>• Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Group of international and regional organizations coming together to forge stronger alliances around civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS)<sup>vii</sup>.</li> <li>• Increased accessibility to newly recovered areas.</li> </ul>	If office does not live up to their commitments technically, administratively, and exercise their independence from politics, the entire system could be undermined.	
		The constant change of government leadership and staff in the key institutions at any level may jeopardize the CRVS process.	
		Inappropriate interpretations of CRVS services delivery to citizens, functions, and the mandates of the intraoffice works.	
		Overlooking the celebration of Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day would undermine a significant role in promoting and raising public awareness on the importance of a CRVS system and Somalia’s commitment regionally.	
		Lack of strong collaboration and coordination on global and regional initiatives and exchange of information, Somalia will not be able to keep up and respond to current global CRVS standards.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of local administrations in the newly recovered areas</li> <li>• Lack of public trust in government services.</li> <li>• Remnants of landmines /other explosive devices</li> </ul>	

<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and humanitarian organizations have appetite to support effective CRVS system.</li> <li>• Ongoing government efforts to build inclusive economies.</li> <li>• Ongoing debt relief efforts</li> <li>• Increased private sector and public investments on infrastructures, economics, social services, etc.</li> </ul>	Limited funds allocations to the CRVS programme and activities might lead to inadequate dedications of institutions to promote ownership and sustainability. Insufficient government budgetary support
<b>Social</b>	Increased public interest in social services such as telecommunications, banking services, etc. which is expected to encourage registration of births and acquisition of subsequent certificates.	Non responsive private sector and public institutions arising from negligence or lack of awareness of the needs and benefits of immediate registration of births and deaths, which leads to persistent low registration coverage.
<b>Technology</b>	Use/ownership of mobile telephones in Somalia is higher among rural (86.2%) & urban (85.5%) residents than nomadic (79.9%) dwellers with 89.6 access to internet per SIHBS (2022) <sup>viii</sup> . This could be a great entry point to digitalization process of CRVS system.	Loss/interruptions of networks, internet connections and power supply could result complete shutdown of the CRVS system and services delivery to citizens.  Hackers can damage the system
<b>Environment</b>		Climate change effects on the environment could disrupt the continuous and permanent nature of the CRVS system
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Bill</li> <li>• Approved CRVS policy</li> <li>• United Nations Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System<sup>ix</sup></li> <li>• African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics</li> </ul>	Lack of alignment of definitions of vital events could undermine the quality of vital statistics from CR, and hence can negatively affect the results of the CRVS implementations at federal, state, regional and district levels.

#### *1.4.10. External Environment Scanning*

The CRVS system's performance is influenced by its external context. Forces in the external environment that influences the system are usually beyond the system's control. However, it is to the advantage of the system to be aware of these external forces so as to be able to take measures to minimize the risks associated with their impacts. Risk minimization measures would involve positively aligning the system's strategy with the forces of change, thereby taking advantage of working with the change rather than being ignorant of it or resisting it.

Analysis of the external environment is about understanding the "big picture" within which the system operates. Analysis of the external environment is often undertaken using PESTEL. The PESTEL analysis is grouped into opportunities and threats. Opportunities may arise from external environmental factors. Some external threats to the CRVS system may also arise from aspects of the PESTLE factors, such as traditional and religious beliefs, natural hazards, unreliable power supply, cyber-attack, and the like.

#### *1.4.11. Internal Environment Scanning*

After analyzing stakeholder participation (stakeholder analysis) and evaluating external environmental factors that could create opportunities or threats (PESTEL), the next step was to assess the internal environment of the system. This involved taking stock of the current CRVS system, identifying strengths and weaknesses (bottlenecks) in order to highlight areas of improvement. The primary objective was to establish a baseline and guiding principles for a strategic plan aimed at enhancing the efficiency, coverage, completeness, and quality of outputs of the CRVS system, ultimately leading to more effective outcomes.

**Table 4: Weaknesses, matched strengths, and recommendations**

<b>Factors analysed</b>	<b>Weaknesses / gaps</b>	<b>Matched strengths</b>	<b>Recommendations/strategy</b>
Legal and policy framework	There is an old, outdated law which is not compatible to the current situation.	There is a draft comprehensive law which is due for enactment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To finalize the draft version of the law</li> <li>• To enact the draft version of the law</li> <li>• Adopt a strategy for periodically review</li> </ul>
Management and organization	<p>Fragmented civil registration and bureaucratic arrangements at all levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of standard structures in the civil registration centres.</li> <li>• There is no inter agency coordination structure.</li> <li>• There is no central database system.</li> <li>• There is no standardized birth certificate.</li> <li>• There is no harmonized fee for registration.</li> <li>• No uniform personal information</li> <li>• Limited number of registration centres across the country</li> <li>• Lack of sufficient budget allocations to CRVS system at Federal and FMS levels.</li> <li>• Limited funds from development to support the CRVS system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong commitments at all levels to harmonize the CRVS system across the country.</li> <li>• Existence of approved national CRVS policy</li> <li>• There is a draft SOPs to harmonize the registration processes.</li> <li>• Existence of stakeholder coordination mechanisms at Federal level (Steering Committee).</li> <li>• Existence of coordination forums between Federal and FMSs</li> <li>• Existence of civil registrars in some districts.</li> <li>• Staff salaries, office space and utilities are covered through ministry’s government budget.</li> <li>• There are engagements with UN and International organization to support the operationalization of CRVS programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To expedite the development of eCRVS (digital) system.</li> <li>• To finalize and approve the existing draft SOPs by the Steering Committee.</li> <li>• To increase the civil registration centres in the country to expand the civil registration services to citizens.</li> <li>• Establish government window for the CRVS system.</li> <li>• Develop resources mobilization strategy for CRVS System</li> <li>• Increase engagements with development and humanitarian partners.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of collaboration between the different institutions of the private/public health facilities and CRVS Centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health facilities have database systems to record birth and death events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase partnerships with health facilities, MCH, and hospitals.</li> </ul>
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited institutional capacity building to strengthen the capacity of the CRVS department including lack of permanent office base.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is approved CRVS structure.</li> <li>The CRVS department has permanent and temporary civil servants and advisors as fulltime/part-time staff.</li> <li>There is CRVS annual approved work plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To strengthen the capacity of CRVS staff and enhance their skills and competence.</li> <li>To establish a permanent and fully equipped and furnished office base for the CRVS department.</li> <li>Develop office regulations, policies, and procedures.</li> <li>To improve internal coordination mechanisms.</li> </ul>
Resources / Infrastructures	Incomplete office infrastructures for the District Registry Offices in most local governments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration offices exist within the local government compounds.</li> <li>The local governments law No 116 mandates the civil registration services to local governments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide dedicated office infrastructures support to the District Registry Offices.</li> <li>Enhance and strengthen the capacities of the district registry office staff to deliver registration services to citizens.</li> </ul>
Advocacy, Communication, and demand creation.	Lack of public awareness about the importance and benefits of registering vital events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of health facilities where birth or death occur.</li> <li>Existence of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs),</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement public awareness strategies/programmes</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of immunization programmes through home visits</li> <li>• CRVS Annual plan priorities and strategies to increase awareness raising.</li> </ul>	about registering vital events nationwide.
Forms and Materials	Registers are not standardized and are not in line with international standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registers and forms are available</li> </ul>	Forms and registers should be revised and aligned with international recommendations to the possible extent, with possibility of applying new technology
ICT and Database management	CRVS does not use digital system for civil registration and vital statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of Health Management Information System (HMIS) and other tools at the health facilities in Somalia which will be feasible to easily adopt eCRVS system.</li> </ul>	Establish and decentralize the eCRVS system nationwide and integrate it with other existing health information management systems.
Storage and archiving	There are no standards of materials for storing and archiving of CR books that are not protected from damage and loss of civil registers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration centres use registration books and some districts use computer database system to keep records</li> </ul>	Improve storage, restore all CR documents, and develop digital backup data centre for all CR documents

## **CHAPTER 2: CRVS SYSTEM SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

Somalia is currently governed by a federal structure consisting of Federal Member States and the Benadir Regional Administration. To effectively implement CRVS activities in Somalia, it is necessary to customize them to cater to the unique developmental requirements of each sub-national jurisdiction. This includes legal provisions, administrative structures, and operational aspects that need to be considered.

The Federal Government of Somalia has been working on establishing a legal and administrative basis for CRVS design and implementation across the country since 2015 in order to address these requirements. However, Somalia's ongoing conflict and fragility present significant challenges to implementing this policy and legal framework and establishing civil registration services throughout the country. Currently, the civil registration completeness is low. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure for CRVS, poor coordination of civil registration across different public and private organs, and a lack of vital statistics production further complicates the situation.

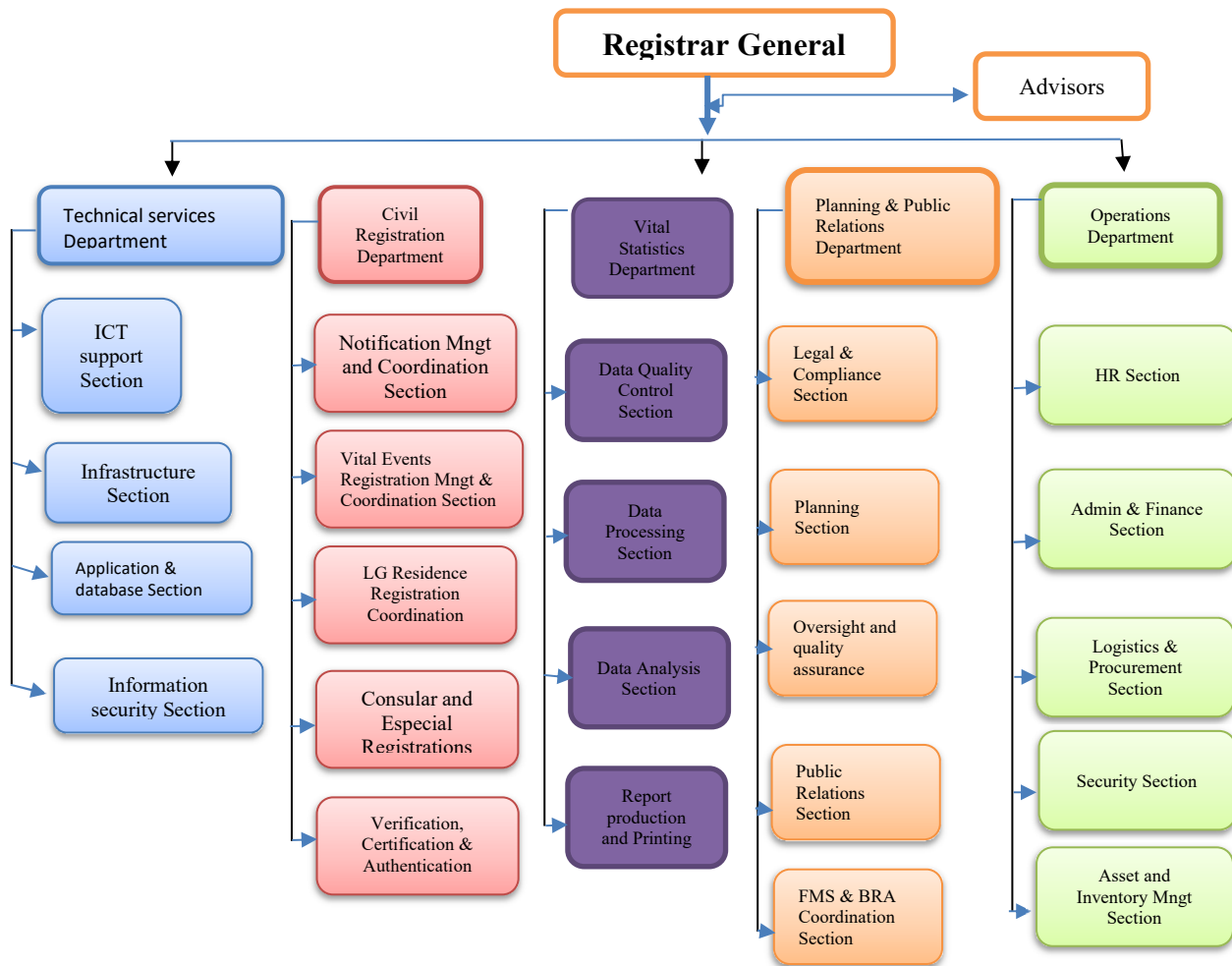
### **2.1. Progress Of Civil Registration System in Somalia**

There has been a renewed commitment by the government over the past few years to expedite the establishment of CRVS system in Somalia. The Department of Civil Registration under the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) is mandated to take the lead in the establishment and implementation of the CRVS system in Somalia. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, CRVS involves the entire administrative, legal and institutional framework, including the personnel, registration network, various procedures, processes of record-keeping and retrieval, issuing of certificates, preparation of outputs, transfer of data, provision of services to other agencies and all other activities pertaining to civil registration in the country. Therefore, the civil registration system encompasses both the registration method and all institutional, technical, and legal settings associated with it.

#### *2.1.1. The Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics*

The Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) operates under the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation. Its primary objective is to oversee, streamline, and enhance the civil registration and vital statistics processes at national level. Additionally, the department is responsible for centrally organizing and maintaining comprehensive records of vital events. The department has collaborative ties with relevant stakeholders such as local government civil registration offices and other relevant institutions.

The organizational structure of the department is depicted in the diagram below.



### 2.1.2. The National Consultative Council (NCC) Agreement on “Allocation of Powers”

The NCC is a high-level platform for executive leaders at FGS and FMS levels in Somalia who negotiate and agree on contentious political issues. In December 2022, the NCC made a significant stride in Somalia's federal system of governance by agreeing on the distribution of powers. The allocation of powers was categorized into federal exclusive, state exclusive, concurrent/shared, and local government exclusive powers. This agreement marks a significant milestone in Somalia's federalism journey and is expected to enhance cooperation between the federal and state governments. It also provides a clear framework for the distribution of powers and responsibilities, which will help to avoid conflicts and promote accountability.

Therefore, in regard to the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system, the agreement on [Allocation of Powers](#) assigned all aspects related to the establishment of laws and policies exclusively to the Federal Government, while local governments have been given responsibility for its implementation. By

assigning the creation of laws and policies related to Civil Registration and Vital Statistics to the Federal Government, the government aims to ensure consistency and uniformity in the registration process across the country. This will also enable the Federal Government to establish a comprehensive legal framework that addresses all aspects of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, including birth registration, death registration, marriage registration, and divorce registration.

On the other hand, local governments have been given the responsibility of implementing the policies and laws related to Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. This includes establishing registration centers, and ensuring that registration services are easily accessible to everyone.

### *2.1.3. National Civil Registration & Vital Statistics Policy*

The Department of Civil Registration has recently developed the national CRVS policy which has been approved by the Council of Ministers. The [Policy](#) establishes a comprehensive framework for the concept of legal identity from birth to death, with legal identity being granted through birth registration and the issuance of a certificate and retiring with the issuance of a death certificate by the civil registration authority upon registration of a death. The Policy recommends a decentralized system administered by local governments in order to ensure its sustainability, and the establishment of coordination mechanisms between relevant ministries. The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics policy was approved by the Council of Ministers of the Federal Government of Somalia on 5 August 2021.

### *2.1.4. CRVS Steering Committee*

The approved CRVS Policy calls for the establishment of a National Steering Committee for CRVS under the leadership of the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) and spells out responsibilities of other ministries and agencies. According to the policy, the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Steering Committee is mandated with strategic-level policy design, planning, resource mobilization and coordination of CRVS in Somalia. Its role is to direct the development of Civil Registration action plans and its strategic framework and to ensure both oversight and accountability for implementing CRVS policy.

The CRVS policy proposes a list of the Ministerial level members of the Steering Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation. It comprises the Federal level Ministries of Health, Justice, Religious Affairs, Women and Human Rights Development, and Education. The Ministers of Interior of Federal Members States of Puntland, Southwest, Jubaland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle and the Governor of Banadir Regional Administration (BRA)/Mayor of Mogadishu also constitute sub-national members of the SC. As per the CRVS policy, the Steering Committee meets annually. Following the approval of the CRVS Policy, the first inaugural Steering Committee meeting was held in Mogadishu on 16 November 2021. The dedication of the stakeholders is paramount to allocate the necessary resources such as legal and institutional frameworks, financial and human resources, and a deliberate policy of interagency collaboration.

As the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) will be in charge of carrying out the Policy's implementation, the functions of the members of the CRVS Steering Committee as follows:

**Table 5: CRVS Steering Committee Members**

Institution	Responsibility
<i>Ministry of Health</i>	<p>The health sector is an active player in CRVS through its role in the notification of births and deaths, events that increasingly occur within health institutions or under the care of health personnel.</p> <p>The Ministry, as the leading Health institution, has a critical role to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with health institutions and community health workers to notify births and deaths for registration.</li> <li>• Ensure the use of standard definitions for key vital events.</li> <li>• Ensure medical certification of causes of death in accordance with international standards.</li> <li>• Collect, analyze, and disseminate health-related data for health purposes.</li> </ul>
<i>Ministry of Justice</i>	Liaise with the courts on registering and certifying marriages and divorces.
<i>Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments</i>	Liaise with religious centers on registering and certifying marriages and divorces.
<i>Somali National Bureau of Statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-produce the annual vital statistics report.</li> <li>• Undertake data quality assurance activities.</li> <li>• Estimate and monitor registration completeness.</li> <li>• Provide denominators at national and sub-national levels</li> </ul>
<i>National Registration and Identification Agency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In coordination with MOIFAR, develop linkages of the CRVS system with the ID system and assure the interoperability of the systems.</li> <li>• Will assist with the software's development</li> </ul>
<i>Immigration and Naturalization Directorate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Registration Certificates are essential requirements to grant travel documents.</li> </ul>
<i>Education, Culture &amp; Higher Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make birth certificate a requirement for school enrolment for children (while ensuring that children are not denied admission because they do not have birth certificates).</li> <li>• Together with the anchor ministry, ensure civil registration officers receive adequate pre-service training</li> </ul>
<i>Ministry of Women and Family Affairs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in advocacy and community mobilization for civil registration and prevention of child marriage (by ensuring the ages of girls are ascertained using birth certificate prior to marriage).</li> </ul>

<p><i>Federal Member States and Banadir Regional Administration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local governments are the direct providers of the service to the population.</li> <li>• The Ministry of Interior of the Federal Member States will coordinate the overall implementation of the national policy at the state level.</li> <li>• The Ministry of Health of the Federal Member States will oversee and liaise with health institutions and community health workers at the state level to notify births and deaths for registration.</li> <li>• Public Registration Directorate of Banadir Regional Administration will coordinate the overall implementation of the national policy in Banadir Region (Mogadishu).</li> </ul>
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### *2.1.5. National CRVS Technical Working Group*

Developing and implementing CRVS system requires cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders. To achieve this, it is necessary to have the political will to establish a uniform system across the country. In addition, it is necessary to deal with practical issues in a concerted approach like expanding the coverage, digitizing, and connecting the systems. Therefore, the Policy suggests establishing mechanisms for cooperation between relevant ministries and a decentralized structure that is run by local governments to ensure its sustainability. The Ministry established the National CRVS Technical Working Group (TWG), which is an intergovernmental forum tasked to oversee the implementation of the CRVS system development and improvement plans in compliance with national, regional, and international standards.

The TWG is chaired and coordinated by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR). According to their ToR, the Group convened six coordination meetings since its establishment over eighteen months ago. Despite the challenges faced by the CRVS-TWG, it has made concerted efforts to enhance coordination and set the foundations for re-establishing the CRVS system in Somalia.

Some of the stakeholders of the TWG contributed to include reviewing the CRVS Bill, developing CRVS Standard Operating Procedures, mapping current and desired workflows, identifying stakeholders, and producing the CRVS improvement annual work plan for 2023.

### *2.1.6. Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Law*

The Ministry is currently finalizing the drafting of the CRVS Law. The Ministry conducted various stakeholder consultation workshops during the process of drafting the CRVS Bill. The consultation workshops are a central component in the drafting process and brought together diverse actors representing the Government from the Federal and FMS levels, civil society, the private sector, academia, and non-governmental organizations to share their views on key issues in order to focus on developing a solid and well-thought-out CRVS law that meets international standards and lays the foundation for a modern and integrated CRVS system. The proposed law is expected to be soon submitted to the Cabinet,

passed by the Parliament, and assented to by the President. This will mark a significant milestone giving a renewed energy to support and prioritize strengthening the CRVS governance and coordination in Somalia.

The draft bill guides the establishment and implementation of a decentralized, modern, high-quality, easily accessible and widespread CRVS service throughout the country; Strengthening the role of local governments in the provision of CR services; Establishment of a national database/archive of all vital records; Establishing an administrative structure responsible for the implementation of CR services and the definition of their respective roles; Implementation of registration centres to carry out the activities of CR system; Sustaining the training of registrars, workers and professionals who carry out the CR activities at the national, state and district levels; and Strengthening the cooperation of the agencies that are part of the activities of CRVS system.

In regard to the types of vital events, the draft Bill collates Death and Foetal Death within the same category and similarly Divorce, Annulment of Marriage and Judicial Separation of Marriage as one category.

#### *2.1.7. CRVS milestones achieved to-date.*

- Establishment of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Department at MOIFAR
- Nomination of CRVS Department Director
- Development of National CRVS Policy
- Development of draft National CRVS Law
- Meetings of National CRVS Steering Committees
- Establishment of Technical Working Group
- Orientation Seminar on National/International CRVS Best Practices
- Consultation and training Workshops on CRVS
- Representation of CRVS Somalia at African and Regional level summits
- Development of SOPs
- Orientation and consultation meetings for FMS CRVS focal points and District Registrars
- Development of CRVS annual workplan
- Establishment of strong liaison with International Partners

## **2.2. Overview of Birth Registration**

Somalia's civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system is one of the weakest in the world and needs significant enhancement with strong political support. The lack of proper understanding and practice of birth registration can be mainly attributed to limited public awareness about its importance as a child's right and the benefits it brings. Another reason is the lack of necessary legal instruments that make birth, death and cause-of-death notification from all health facilities (public, private and NGOs) mandatory.



According to the Somali Health and Demographic [Survey](#) 2020, the percentage of children under 2 years of age who had been registered was 3.8 from a survey made on 6,935 children. Out of this, 0.2% have been issued a birth certificate. For children aged 2-4 years, 3.3% had been registered from a survey made on 12,929 children, of whom 0.4% had been issued birth certificate.

### 2.2.1. Current demand for birth certificates in Somalia

An additional district-level assessment was conducted in order to assess the unique processes of obtaining birth certificates. These represent severely delayed cases of birth registration where demands arise mainly from adults. They apply directly at the civil registration office and obtain certificate without having to provide any supporting documentations. There are only 35 birth registration offices across the entire country. There is no uniformity on the service fee and the charges are determined by the district commissioner/mayor. The fees charged range from \$10 – \$50 for obtaining a birth certificate.

**Table 6: Overview of the typical birth registration at district level**

S#	District birth registration offices	State/Region	Fee for birth registration	Purposes
1.	Shangani	Benadir	\$15	Passport driving licence Opening bank account
2.	Wadajir			
3.	Hodan			
4.	Bosasso	Puntland	\$12	Passport Driving licence Opening bank account Processing school certificate
5.	Garowe			
6.	Galkacyo			
7.	Qardo			
8.	Eyl			
9.	Laas-Anod	Sool & Sanag	\$20	Passport Driving licence Opening bank account Land ownership
10.	Erigabo			
11.	Hargeisa	Somaliland	\$25 - \$30	Passport Driving licence Opening bank account Land ownership
12.	Borama			
13.	Berbera			
14.	Burao			
15.	Odwayne			
16.	Zeyla			
17.	Ainabo			
18.	Sheikh			
19.	Baki			
20.	Baidoa	South West	\$25	Passport

21.	Barawe		\$25	Opening bank account
22.	Dinsoor		\$15	Processing school certificate
23.	Afgooye		\$15	Passport
24.	Dhusamareb	Galmudug	\$10	Opening bank account
25.	Adado		\$10	Processing school certificate
26.	Abudwak		\$10	
27.	Galkayo		\$15	
28.	Guriel		\$10	
29.	dhobleey	Jubbaland	\$50	Passport,
30.	Garbaharey		\$50	opening bank account,
31.	Afmadow		\$50	Request from diaspora
32.	Kismaayo		\$50	
33.	Jowhar	Hirshabelle	\$17	Passport
34.	Warsheekh		\$15	Opening bank account
35.	Beledweyne		\$20	Processing school certificate

### 2.2.2. Birth Registration Business Process Map

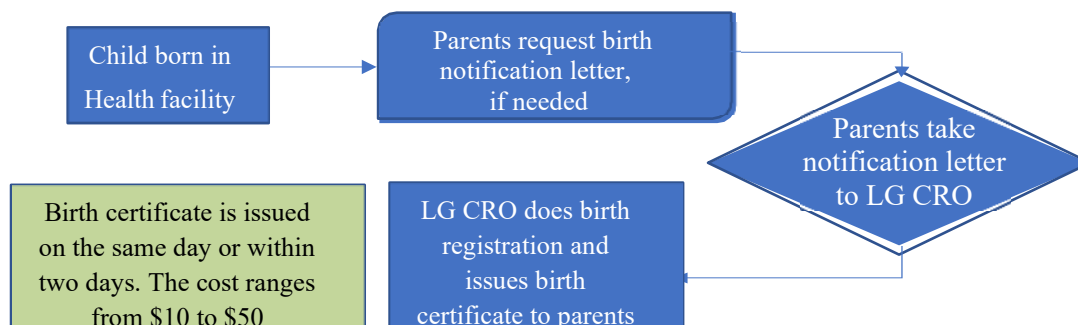
The following section evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the current Somalia CRVS system, drawing from a rapid mapping exercise conducted during the initial Somalia CRVS Improvement Programme Mission and Orientation Workshop. This mission brought together key institutions from the Federal Government and was held in Nairobi from November 29 to December 3, 2021, with support from ECA and UNICEF. The assessment aims to identify areas of success and improvement, informing the development of a strategic plan to enhance the efficiency, coverage, completeness, and quality of CRVS outputs, ultimately leading to more effective outcomes.

a) Birth registration process map in health facilities —As-is or current process

*a (1). Health Facilities: Skilled Birth Attendant (SBA)*

1. Notification from Nurse or midwives, sometimes doctors conduct the notification upon parents’ request and registers in delivery book.
2. Parents take notification letter to Local Government Civil Registration Office (LG CRO).
3. LG CRO registers the birth and issues birth certificate with a cost ranging between \$10 and \$50.
- 4.

**Figure 1: Birth registration business process - As-is or current process**



*a(2). Birth registration process map in home delivery (Traditional BAs/SBA —as-is or current process*

1. Mothers/child receive vaccination and clinical vaccination card is filled. The process involves lady health workers.
2. The key stakeholders involved in birth registration are: local government and MoH.
3. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is also involved in the process as it is mandatory for children enrolled in schools to present legal identity documents to be registered in the MoE information management system/database—the process needs more investigation to establish the role of education actors/schools.

**Bottlenecks in the process:**

- Limited awareness among the public on the importance of birth registration.
- Health facilities register birth occurrence in their manual registers or databases but have no linkages with the Registrar-General and authorities that issue birth certificates (LGs).
- Lack of clear and standardized procedures for notification and registration of birth events in both the community and health facilities.
- Inconsistent and non-identical certificates issued by local authorities in different states.
- Lack of understanding among the officials of the Civil Registration and differences between notification and registration of vital events (birth and death).
- Non-existent and incomplete legal framework, poor demand creation coupled with weaknesses in services and unnecessary barriers on the supply side.
- Politicizing the registration of births as several politicians equate birth registration with granting legal residence rights to the vast internally displaced peoples in specific areas.
- Most local governments view the issuance of birth certificates as a vital income source.

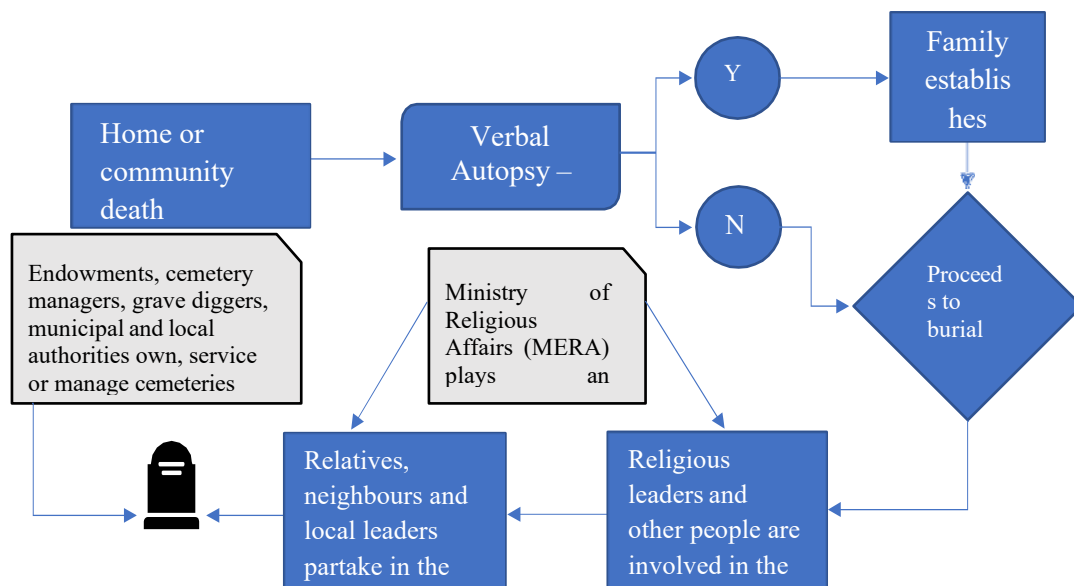
**2.3. Overview of Death Registration**

The comprehensive assessment findings reveal that death registration in Somalia is not widely practiced. There is a lack of official standard forms for certifying deaths that occur outside health facilities, and the methods for issuing death notifications are inconsistent. Home deaths often occur without any official documentation, while medical practitioners may occasionally provide a medical report for deaths within health facilities, but only upon request from the family. The majority of deaths are classified as "ill-defined and unknown causes of mortality," and there is limited use of internationally recognized forms for certifying the cause of death. Verbal autopsy is commonly used to determine the cause of death in cases where a physician has not certified it.

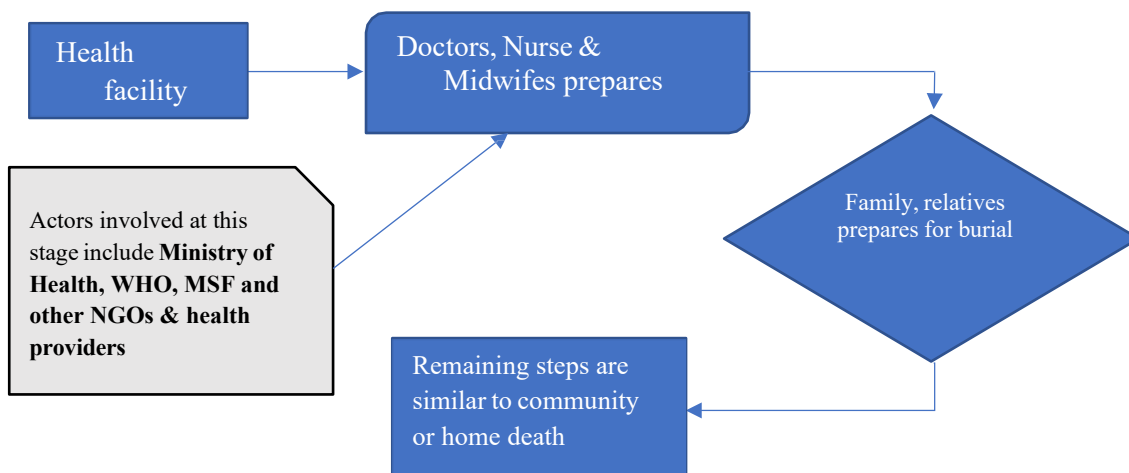
In addition, the current recording system for causes of death in official health facility records is severely lacking a systematic approach. There are inconsistent regulations, tools, and practices being used across different facilities. Although some health facilities supported by humanitarian agencies do generate monthly mortality reports, there is a significant dearth of reliable data when it comes to determining the specific causes of death.

Compounding the problem further, the government has yet to establish a standardized method for documenting causes of death in health facilities, with ICD 10 practices. This lack of standardization creates a major hurdle in accurately assessing mortality rates and understanding the underlying factors contributing to deaths. Furthermore, doctors are ill-equipped to certify the cause of death due to insufficient training.

**Figure 2: Death registration process in both health facilities — *As-is or current process***



**Figure 3: Death registration process in community — *As-is or current process***



### Bottleneck in the process:

- Low levels of awareness among the public about the value of death certificates.
- Not having appropriate data collection tools and transfer procedures, specifically at community and private health facilities.
- Limited capacity of health workers to register deaths and establish CoD;
- Different entities involved in recording deaths and issuing death certificates (e.g., the police, health facilities, and local governments).
- Lack of consistent and standardized procedures for notification and registration of deaths in both the community and health facilities.
- Non-existent and incomplete legal framework, poor demand creation, lack of enforcement (as a pre-condition for burials), and lack of awareness and knowledge among the public about where and who registers and issues death certificates.

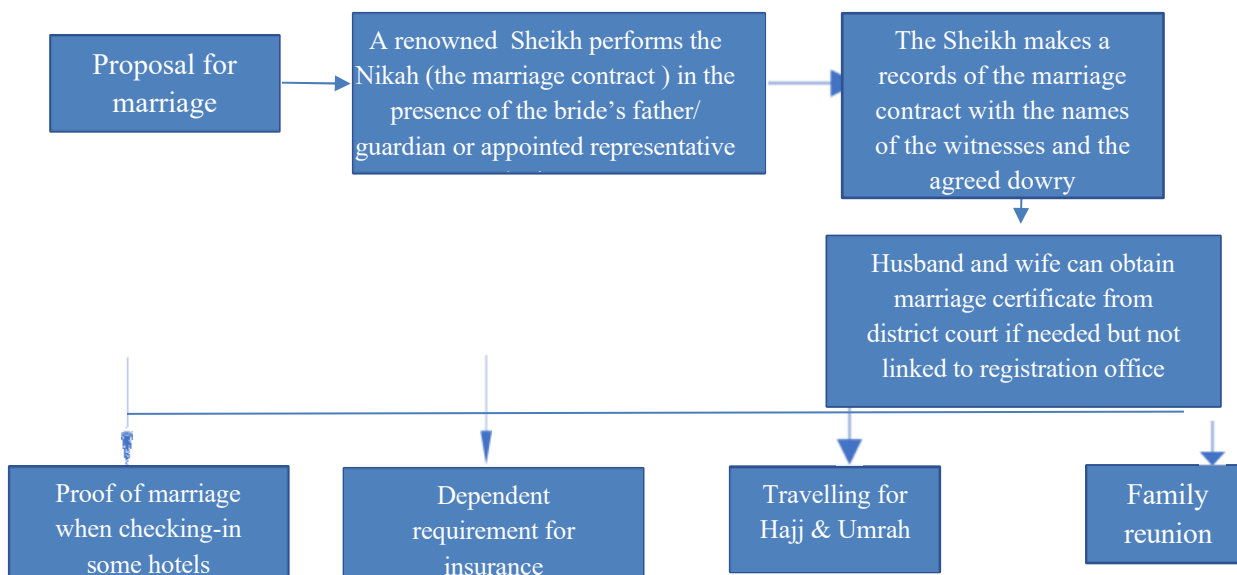
## 2.4. Overview of the Business process for marriage registration

### 2.4.1. Processes of marriages

The marriage registration as a vital event in Somalia is governed by the LAW No. 23 of 11<sup>th</sup> January 1975. The law recognizes the registration of marriages and divorces. However, the current business process entails three different occasions that include: a preliminary ceremony of a wish to marry and a ceremony of engagement, marriage and wedding. All these ceremonies are legally recognized as an essential process for establishment of a family:

- A preliminary ceremony of a wish to marry brings together families of the fiancés to announce and payment of bride price literally meaning to ask and payment of dowry.
- A ceremony of engagement, marriage and wedding, brings together the two families of the fiancés for marriage. The marriage is performed by a person who is versed in the Islamic Sharia.

**Figure 4: As-Is or current process of marriage registration**



## 2.5. Overview of the current business process for divorce registration

The husband has the right to initiate divorce (talaq), but it is uncommon for individuals to officially register a divorce unless it takes place in court with a judge present, resulting in the issuance of a divorce certificate. Official divorce registration is an important step that follows the successful conclusion of divorce proceedings in a court of law. This ensures that the divorce is acknowledged by the relevant authorities and creates an official record of the marriage dissolution. Registering the divorce allows individuals to obtain a certified copy of the divorce certificate, which serves as evidence of their changed marital status.

## 2.6. Vital statistics generation process—Current Process

- No vital statistics are currently generated in Somalia, and the SNBS carried out its first health survey in 2020. The CRVS policy prioritizes the generation of vital statistics. However, the country still lacks any action plans or a strategic plan to guide the production and dissemination of vital statistics.

### **Bottlenecks in the process:**

- Limited awareness among government leaders about the significance of generating quality vital statistics and the importance of completeness, reliability, and timely vital statistics for health planning and monitoring of SDGs;
- Lack of and incomplete legal framework and reliable data storage and information sharing mechanisms; and capacity to compile, classify and tabulate vital events data;
- Lack of systematic flow of information and data processes and procedures, and commitments or requirements for timely production and reporting of vital statistics.

## 2.7. Opportunity for accelerated improvement of CRVS

There are various internal and external opportunities that could facilitate the enhancement of Somalia's CRVS system. The most significant opportunity is the finalization of the draft Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Law, which is set to be submitted for endorsement by the Cabinet and subsequently enacted by Parliament. This law will provide the foundation for establishing a modern, integrated, and comprehensive CRVS system in Somalia. Development Partners, spearheaded by UNICEF and UNECA, are supportive of this initiative, and other international organizations such as IOM have expressed their willingness to contribute to the improvement process in various ways.

An external opportunity that could enhance Somalia's CRVS system is the growing recognition of the significance of CRVS systems at global and regional levels, as a fundamental component of international and regional development agendas, such as the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The Global CRVS Scaling Up Investment Plan by the World Bank and WHO, which aims to achieve “*universal civil registration of births, deaths, marriages, and other vital events, including reporting cause of death, and access to legal proof of registration for all individuals by 2030*”<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/publication/global-civil-registration-vital-statistics-scaling-up-investment>

The establishment of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration in August 2010 is a significant development at the continental level for CRVS. This Conference serves as a permanent platform that convenes every two years to provide policy directions necessary for transforming CRVS systems, monitor and advise on the progress of the regional initiative on CRVS. The continued engagement of the Ministers Responsible for civil registration in the improvement of CRVS demonstrates strong political support and reflects the level of commitment by African countries to address the challenge of invisibility in their populations. The Africa CRVS Core Group's concerted effort to support the continental framework has enabled alignment of institutional mandates, maximizing available resources for the continent. Additionally, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has created a set of resources that countries can utilize to carry out high-quality assessments and cost-effective plans for reform and has also trained a group of advisors who can offer technical assistance to countries as needed.

## CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3.1. Overview of the Key findings

#### 3.1.1. Legal and policy framework:

- There is an old legal framework which governs the civil registration system in Somalia that dates during the United Nations' trusteeship under the Italian Administration: Law No. 22. In addition, there is also an old family law No. 23 of 1975 that states marriage and divorce contract certificate should be registered by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Religious Affairs.
- There is a Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) policy that Somalia adopted in 2021. The policy outlines the responsibilities of local governments regarding civil registration services according to Article 9.10 of Law No. 116/2013.
- According to UNFPA's CRVS Somalia Country Profile, the current CRVS legal framework is framed around the National Law No. 7 of 2003, in which article 9.10 bestows the responsibility of local government to register births, deaths, marriages and divorces. ([https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/crvs\\_report.pdf](https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/crvs_report.pdf))
- The CRVS policy outline that, according to article 428 (2) of the Somali Penal Code No. 5 of 1962, individuals who fail to disclose or conceal the name of a child in the civil registry will be subject to punishment. The CRVS policy also emphasizes that Somalia, as a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), has a national obligation to ensure that every child is registered immediately after birth and has the right to a name, nationality, and, to the extent possible, knowledge and care from their parents.

#### 3.1.2. Organization and functioning of the civil registration and vital statistics systems

- The civil registration services provided by local governments, such as issuing birth certificates, are supported by well-coordinated organizational and administrative arrangements. These arrangements involve agencies like public notary offices, district courts, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Somali Police Force, and local government offices. While there is no official interagency committee, these agencies involved in civil registration hold regular meetings to address issues and find solutions. However, there is limited collaboration, with each agency operating independently, which leads to problems like duplicate work and inconsistencies in the vital statistics provided by each institution.

#### 3.1.3. Forms used for birth registration.

- Birth registration processes in the country vary among registration offices, lacking a standardized format, resulting in inconsistencies and do not conform to the international recommendations.
- There are no special features of security, such as bar coding, and can therefore be easily forged.



### 3.13.Coverage and completeness of registration

- Out of the 92 districts in the country, only 35 currently issue birth certificates, leaving a significant portion of the population without access to this civil registration service. Therefore, the coverage is very limited.
- The civil registration system does not capture all of the events in the covered population.

### 3.2 Data storage and transmission

- Of the 92 districts, there is only one local registration office in Mogadishu and three offices in Puntland that record and store the collected information on births through registry books. All other offices in the other federal member states do not record and store the collected information on births or deaths.

### 3.3.Death Registration and Cause of death

#### A. *Compliant practices for death certification*

- There is no well-organized practice for medical certification of deaths, even if the patients die at the hospitals. This is because there are no mandatory requirements for the physician to complete the death certification. There are no sufficient medical record departments at the hospitals; however, there are inpatient and outpatient records with no standardized death certificate forms.

#### B. *Hospital death certification*

- When patients die in the hospital, the reasons for their death are not properly recorded. Some hospitals get support from UN agencies and RCRC to produce monthly reports of death and disease rates, using forms and log books and other HMIS materials. These reports are sent to the MOH every month, but the MOH does not use them to produce any statistics.

#### C. *Deaths occurring outside hospital*

- No official forms exist to certify deaths occurring outside hospitals. Instead of forensic experts the police carry out the investigation and issue cause of death notification for unnatural deaths outside hospitals.
- Some hospitals, like Hargeisa Group, Gargar Hospital and Bender Qasim Hospital, issue death certificates that do not meet the national standards and are not accepted widely.

#### D. *Practices affecting the quality of cause-of-death data*

- Somalia does not have any data collection practices for cause of death. Only a few hospitals in Puntland and Hargeisa report hospital deaths using ICD-10. The hospital only gives a medical report with the cause-of-death information related to medical complications if the deceased's family or other parties ask for it. In most cases, there is no data on cause of deaths.

#### *E. Mortality coding practices*

- Currently, there is no accurate practice of the ICD10 anywhere in the country.
- There are no coding ICD selection guidelines for underlying cause of death data applied coding.

#### *F. Mortality coder qualification and training*

- There are no training courses available in the health institutes or opportunities for on-the-job training for health practitioners

#### *G. Data quality and plausibility checks*

- There are periodic surveys to collect data related to child mortality, infant mortality rate, and fertility mortality rate data as there is no national standardized data collection mechanism. These surveys are for planning purposes by the humanitarian agencies using several fertility indicators such as crude birth or fertility rate, age-specific fertility rate and total fertility rate. These were supposed to be routinely calculated from the civil registration and vital statistics data but unfortunately it is not available right now.
- There is no compiled birth and deaths data according to date of occurrence or to date of registration.
- No birth and death data compiled according to place of occurrence as well as place of usual residence.

#### *H. Data access and dissemination*

- The main users of the vital statistics in Somalia are the government ministries and humanitarian and development organizations for planning purposes. However, no engagement strategy is available to regularly discuss data needs with the main data users.
- Currently, there is no periodic dissemination of birth and death statistics data year in which births and deaths occurred) to the dissemination of the birth and death except general reports and AWP publications that present facts and figures in collaborations with donors and humanitarian and development agencies.

## Recommendations:

### A.1: Legal basis and resources for civil registration:

- To develop a comprehensive legal framework for the governance of civil registration and vital statistics of the country with its implementation regulations that are aligned to the regional and global instruments of the civil registration and vital statistics systems.
- To review existing laws of the vital statistics to ensure vital statistics is defined in the most appropriate interpretations in close collaboration with the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics (SNBS).
- Align all definitions with the international standards in the Glossary.
- Develop a birth and death registration manuals for guidance to the field staffs to ensure all relevant actors have enough reference guiding tools. This birth and death registration manual should include a list of the informants such as legally responsible informants:
  - a) In case of birth:
    - parents, guardians, local public representatives, community polices, police, health workers, school teachers, NGO workers, etc.
  - b) In case of death:
    - children's guardians, local public representatives, community police, police, health workers, NGO workers, graveyard authorities, etc.
- Roll out the enforcement of births and deaths reporting by hospitals and health facilities including enforcement of birth and death reporting within 45 days.
- Strengthen the coordination mechanisms at federal and state levels with ministries and other government agencies and local governments to improve efficiency, avoid duplication, and create permanent and sustainable funding mechanisms.

### A.2: Registration infrastructure and resources

- To take up the responsibility for financing and sustaining our national CRVS plans and, when necessary, mobilize resources to cover the financing gap. The CRVS annual budget in 2023 was \$3,100,000 of which \$450,000 has been secured from donors.
- Explore cooperation arrangements with Pan African organizations such as AUC, UNECA, AfDB, etc. to set-up a financing mechanism for the revival of Somalia's CRVS.
- To establish Civil Registration (CR) offices in all districts of Somalia.
- Develop a digital CRVS system with centralized database at Federal level (the centre).
- Connect all the register offices to the eCRVS system.
- Conduct Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment (ITOCA), Organizational Performance Index (OPI), and Organizational Network Assessment (ONA) to develop and implement a clear Institutional Strengthening Plans (ISPs) on CRVS's sustainable capacity development through intra-office cooperation arrangements and in partnership with support groups.

## **B: Registration practices, coverage, and completeness**

### **B1: Organization and functioning of the vital statistics system.**

- Establish a nationwide process of harmonizing, standardizing, unifying, and inter-operable and sharable database and civil registration forms that covers all parts in Somalia.
- Strengthen the capacities of civil registrars and other technical staffs on the inter-operable civil registration system.
- Roll out a nationwide awareness raising on how information inflow and outflow between civil registration offices and the centre works through the eCRVS system.
- Convene stakeholder engagements for standardizing the provision of Personal Identification Number (PIN) or Unique Identification Number (UIN), this same number that will be utilized by the citizens across all government's administrative databases.
- Create an integrated collaborative mechanism across CR office, federal and state ministries of Health, other non-governmental, governmental, and private health facilities, and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Somali Police Force so that CRVS system captures data on all vital events without much delay.
- Initiate a process of strengthening the existing capabilities of the CR offices in all parts of Somalia that include rehabilitation of office spaces, provision of office furniture and ICT infrastructure to improve efficiency, coordination, data harmonization and sharing at the grassroots levels.
- Enhance the capacity of the workers of the health facilities on the processes and systems of recording the vital events in their HFs so that they can record standardized data and provide notification to the centre more effectively and efficiently.
- Roll out nationwide awareness raising campaign on building public knowledge and understanding about the recording all vital events.
- Create a strong community-based implementation mechanism so that each birth or death is registered.
- Establish communication mechanisms between registration authority and others.
- Improve coordination with NIRA and other agencies to equip the CRVS data centre and use the ICT resources more appropriately.
- Introduce a system of data validation in the birth and death registration database so that duplicate and/or wrong entries can be identified, cleaned up, and/or corrected.
- Make a legal provision to include cause of death as per ICD-10 in death registration form and make it a binding for every death. Also set up a detail procedure for death registration in addition to the legal provision.
- Introduce a standard procedure for checking the completeness and consistency of information at the points of birth and death registration.
- Introduce a routine system to check registration data monthly or quarterly to ensure that they are comparable with previous years.
- Introduce a system at the central level that the expected numbers of births and deaths that should occur each year are routinely estimated for each registration area and compared to the actual numbers of registered events.
- Forge purposeful partnerships with technical institutions of higher learning and the support groups to appropriate substantive and technological benefits for Somalia's eCRVS nationally.

## **B.2: Review of forms used for birth and death registration**

- Organize consultative workshop to determine whether any of the missing UN COIA recommended items should be included in the birth and death registration forms and take follow up actions accordingly.
- Organize review consultation workshops with WHO, Pan African Organizations, and other partners, to intensify their efforts in developing real time death registration and causes of death information systems.
- Establish specific coordination mechanisms while piloting the harmonized systems and processes between birth registrars, CRVS, and the Ministry of Health in first three months to ensure data is smoothly collected without bottlenecks.
- Initiate a process of considering the possibility of including the UN COIA indicators into the CRVS data collection tools.

## **B.3: Coverage and completeness of registration**

- Develop and implement a Community Awareness and Participation Plan (CAPP) to increase the community engagements about the importance and implications of birth and death registration.
- Through the implementing regulations, create a provision making registration of births and deaths obligatory.
- Introduce an effective monitoring and supervision system and cross-checking mechanism including late birth registrations for local administrative bodies to ensure full coverage of birth and death registration within their jurisdiction.
- Develop an effective communication system with the health facilities so that the community-based health workers play their roles of active informants for all new births and deaths taking place in the respective localities.
- Improve the recording mechanisms of proportion of registered deaths that take place in health facilities as well as in homes.
- Increase access to coverage for birth and death registration in IDP settlements.
- Create a coordination mechanism between stakeholders both centrally as well as locally to improve coverage of civil registration so that birth information is communicated for registration purposes.
- Make efforts to train health workers on ICD-10 coding system so that all deaths which have taken place in health facilities are reported.
- Enhance enforcement of the law for producing birth certificate for receiving certain social services and benefits, for inheritance transfers, and life insurance claims.
- Observe the national birth registration day with much more visible campaigns and include a death registration campaign.
- Make a provision for the evaluation of campaigns held to increase awareness about civil registration.

#### **B.4: Data storage and transmission**

- Establish a proper filing system to preserve copies of births and deaths registration application forms and of other supporting papers.
- Establish remote disaster recovery system as a second data back-up that can be stored at federal data centre of eCRVS.
- Establish a secured electronic archive to create and maintain of all birth and death records.
- Introduce a more robust authentication procedure and legal measures to avoid fraudulent and multiple registrations.
- Train federal desk staff (data centre) to exercise caution and prevent fraudulent or multiple registrations of births and increase registrar office's awareness to protect from such malpractice.
- Create a provision for multi-stakeholders' access to use data for sharing.
- Establish clear guidelines about level of confidentiality and who can view the information from birth and registration forms or database records.
- Establish policies and/or procedures for two-way technical communication mechanism and data transfer for State and federal CRVS office (electronically) when corrections, clarifications, and guidance are needed by field registrars' offices.

### **C: Death certification and cause of death**

#### **C1: ICD-compliant practices for death certification**

- Roll out nationwide campaigns through to increase percentage of death registration out of total deaths using multi-stakeholders' collaboration especially with MoH and private sector to improve coverage.
- Make a mandatory provision for death registration with cause of death certification by physician according to ICD-10 code and mechanisms to identify medically certified deaths and those certified by a layperson.
- Provide capacity building trainings with federal desk (centre) staff to compile separate medically certified deaths and those certified by a layperson for cause of death statistics.
- Roll out the introduction and adaptation of the international form of medical certificate (cause of death) for all deaths occurring in Somalia.
- Provide capacity building trainings, mentorship and coaching with medical doctors in public, private and NGO sector hospitals on how to correctly complete the death certificate, including the causal sequence and the underlying cause.
- Establish partnership and collaborative engagement with academics, particular the medical faculties to emphasize on teaching students the curricular content on proper death certification.
- Ensure the CRVS publish sufficient copies of ICD-10 book and supplied to each health facility.

#### **C2: Hospital death certification**

- Promote awareness raising messages at the health facilities about the enforcement of the legal provisions for the health facilities to inform the CRVS authority on birth and death events occurring there using the digitalized system.

### **C3: Deaths occurring outside health facility.**

- Establish a system for medical death certificates to be needed for the burial of deceased individuals and easy access to the required documents.
- Establish partnership with corporate groups of burial services to ensure they adopt using the system (death certificates with the cause of death indicated for people who die at home) as a mandatory requirement - a legal pre-requisite for burial of any deceased individual.
- Ensure the technical knowledge and training materials of medical death certification is available for any competent authority (not necessarily by a physician) including community health workers and as a result, they are authorised to issue the death certificate (as a proof of death for death registration).
- Create measures to ensure all medical doctors follow common standards in issuing death certificates with the cause of death indicated.
- Train community health workers as verbal autopsy and assign them to obtain the cause of death for any non-medically certified deaths in the country.
- Make provision for use of the WHO recommended special death form for perinatal death for audit, monitoring and reporting.
- Make a provision for the death certificate form or the death registration form to include information on death of a woman to state whether and/or not she was pregnant had recently been pregnant.
- Provide proper pre-service training with medical doctors on ICD-compliant death certification is implemented, managing privacy protection.

## **ICD coding practices**

### **D1: Mortality coding practices**

- Develop and introduce a clear guidelines and procedures of communicating ICD-10 death coding to civil registrars from the Ministry of Health.
- Start scaling of hospital death recording and reporting as per ICD to gather and publish statistics as per ICD-10.
- Develop monitoring and supervision plans on ICD-10 and ensure the progresses and the data are fed to the online central server routinely.
- Establish a quality control mechanism at each health facility for the ICD coding practice (morbidity and mortality reporting).
- Set up a decentralized ICD coding system in health facilities and introduce verbal autopsy system in communities, with the support of community health care workers.

### **D2: Mortality coder qualification and tracing**

- Train CRVS staff to scale all public and private health facilities within reasonable time.
- Provide ICD-10 training on morbidity and mortality with medical health facility staff.
- Collaborate with WHO to provide trainings to local trainers on WHO-FIC.
- Provide capacity building trainings, mentorship and coaching with medical staff of health facility who are engaged in ICD coding.

### **D3: Quality of mortality coding**

- Establish partnership with WHO to provide sufficient supply of ICD-10 manuals and guidelines for distribution among all health facilities and organizations adequately.
- Work with the Ministry of Health team on MIS to keep a watch on the development of ICD coding practices globally and according to the live update published on the website and to local context.
- Create a standing operating procedure of periodic assessment of the quality of the ICD compliant death coding.
- Strengthen and continue using the existing MIS built-in mechanism to provide feedback to local statistical staff to improve their work quality and to improve the newly introduced ICD compliant death coding system.

### **Data access, use and quality checks**

#### **E1 – Data quality and plausibility checks**

- Improve the existing coordination mechanisms between stakeholders to support the establishment of civil registration offices across Somalia.
- Support and coordinate with relevant stakeholders and actors on the governments' plans to initiative the complete installation of digital systems in the health facilities and decentralize the systems with effective sustainable procedure to generate data for required indicators.
- Create a robust system for calculating all mortality indicators from routine data.
- Increase monitoring to ensure a decrease of inconsistencies among the reported figures.

#### **E2 – Data tabulation**

- To work with SNBS to create measures for birth and death registration statistical publication report.
- Ensure all stakeholders use the four ICD standard mortality tabulation lists for data presentation purposes.

#### **E3 - Data access and dissemination**

- Work with the SNBS to make adequate vital statistics data available, reliably and is easily accessible publicly.
- Develop an engagement strategy to regularly discuss data needs with the main data users.
- Conduct advocacy sessions, meetings, and workshops to guide policy and practice the use.



## Conclusion:

- Although Somalia aspires to implement international standards for civil registration and vital statistics, various obstacles hinder the realization of its full compliance. These barriers include legal framework and awareness among the population about the importance of registering vital events. Insecure conditions and natural calamities in some parts of the country and a lack of effective coordination between stakeholders also pose challenges. Additionally, armed conflict and conflict-related migration create specific difficulties for maintaining a universal civil registration and vital statistics system in some countries in the region. Therefore, it is imperative to prioritize the establishment of a reliable civil registration and vital statistics system in Somalia to promote accountability, transparency, and good governance in order to achieve progress in the implementation of CRVS in Somalia.
- It is critical to strengthen resilience in the context of emergencies as civil registration systems may be eroded or even collapse. Issues to be considered such situations include mitigation strategies, security, and confidentiality of information, improve coordination among stakeholders, and use innovations and new technology to support the resilience of CR systems.
- Country leadership and ownership, along with clear legal frameworks, are critical for the success of a CR system. In conflict situations, technical support and development finance may be needed to cover budget gaps in the short and medium term.
- Importance of maintaining government leadership and human rights in emergencies when the CR system is challenged.
- The roles of development partners are important for improved funding support, capacity, structures, technology, and other pillars for a functioning CR system.
- In times of emergencies and conflicts, it is crucial to prioritize the maintenance and restoration of registration services as it contributes to human rights, state building, and governance. To fully comprehend the complexities surrounding civil registration systems during such circumstances, it is necessary to examine the experiences of countries in conflict or emergency situations, as well as research findings and expert opinions from Africa and globally.
- It is imperative to develop guidelines and recommendations to enhance countries' preparedness, including identifying key risk mitigation strategies that would make CRVS systems resilient in future emergencies and conflict situations.

## sources

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