



Federal Republic of Somalia
Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs & Reconciliation

**SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AND
VITAL STATISTICS STEERING COMMITTEE**

Background Information

26TH November 2023

**1. ABOUT THE NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS STEERING
COMMITTEE**

A properly functioning Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Services is a crucial component for the development and sustainability of a functional society in Somalia, just as it is in any other nation. This system provides accurate and reliable information about births, deaths, and other vital events, which is essential for planning and implementing social programs, public policies, and infrastructure development. Additionally, it allows individuals to exercise their rights and access essential services such as healthcare, education, and legal services. Therefore, investing in the improvement and modernization of this system is critical for the overall progress and well-being of the Somali people.

It was established in Somalia over a century ago, and local administrations were responsible for providing this service to the public. This service was expanding daily and running successfully until civil wars and internal conflicts resulted in the downfall of Somalia's central government in 1991.

For the past ten years, the Federal Republic of Somalia has prioritized the restoration and re-establishment of civil registration and vital statistics system which is the foundation of obtaining a legal identity and proof of citizenship in Somalia. These efforts to rebuild and restore the civil registration and vital statistics, which is spearheaded by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation, have resulted in the development of a National Policy on civil registration and vital statistics, which it was subsequently approved by the Council of Ministers in August 2021.

This Policy establishes a Steering Committee chaired by the Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation of FGS, with representatives from relevant federal and state ministries, as well as government agencies and departments. The Steering Committee's functions are as follows:

- Policy and strategy development: Developing and updating policies, strategies, and action plans for improving civil registration and vital statistics system.
- Oversight and monitoring: Monitoring the progress of civil registration and vital statistics activities and ensuring that they meet agreed goals and standards.
- Resource allocation: Allocating budget and resources to support civil registration initiatives and reforms.
- Legal and regulatory framework: Ensuring that the legal and regulatory framework for civil registration is robust and up to date.
- Coordination: Facilitating coordination and collaboration among different government agencies and organizations involved in civil registration.

- Advocacy and awareness: Promoting the importance of civil registration among the public and advocating for increased registration rates.
- Data quality and security: Ensuring the accuracy, confidentiality, and security of civil registration and vital statistics data.

The Committee had its first annual meeting in November 2022, approving the national work plan for the civil registration and vital statistics sector. This will be the second annual meeting of the Committee.

2. WHAT ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN 2023?

a. Completion of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Law:

- i. The draft law on civil registration and vital statistics was completed through a participatory process that included a national conference that brought together all relevant stakeholders. The participants made useful suggestions and recommendations, most of which have been incorporated into law. The final draft of the law has now been presented to the Council of Ministers, and it is hoped that it will be approved by the Council of Ministers and then forwarded to the Parliament for enactment.
- ii. Standard and business operating procedures for civil registration and Vital Statistics have been developed in consultation with the relevant stakeholders to ensure that vital events are registered properly.

b. Improved coordination and collaboration among civil registration and vital statistics institutions. CRVS institutions and other relevant government agencies acknowledge that active coordination between civil registration institutions and government agencies that support or benefit from the CRVS is a necessary component of managing a country's identification system. Based on this realization, several meetings were held, with the majority of them focusing on implementing the Steering Committee's approved National Workplan for 2022. The most recent of these meetings took place in October 2022

c. Development of a five-year strategic plan for civil registration and Vital Statistics sector: before the development of the five-year strategic plan, a comprehensive assessment of the CRVS sector was carried out in consultation with relevant stakeholders in the civil registration and vital statistics sector and with the assistance of international experts. The comprehensive assessment identified the challenges and gaps that exist in the CRVS sector and provided useful recommendations to address such challenges. The recommendations, with the assistance of international experts, were translated into a five-year strategic plan that aims to establish effective civil registration and vital statistics in Somalia.

d. Strengthening the institutional capacity of CRVS institutions: Civil registration offices and civil registrars were provided with resources and training to help them deliver civil registration services more effectively. Computers and office furniture were handed over to civil registrar's office at the following districts: Hodan, Wadajir, Yaaqshiid, Shingaani, Warsheik, Jowhar, Buloburte, Baletweine, hudur, Waajid, Baidoa, Brava, Kismaio, Dhobley, Garbaharey, Afmadow, Adado, Gaalkaio, Abudwak iyo Dusmareb).

Furthermore, the above-mentioned civil registrar's office had received training on how to enforce the provisional standard and business operating procedures for the registration of vital events.

- e. An online civil registration and vital statistics (birth and death registration) is developed, which will be launched in the upcoming meeting of the Steering Committee. The automation of birth and death registration will be the first step taken towards to the full automation of the civil registration and vital statistics in Somalia.

Though the accomplishments stated above are encouraging for the re-establishment of an effective civil registration and vital statistics system, there are serious challenges that could thwart the ongoing efforts. Among these challenges is a lack of sufficient funding to adequately finance the re-establishment of the CRVS system. Less than 20% of the allocated 2023 budget of 3.1 million dollars was secured. Furthermore, the limited institutional capacity of civil registration institutions and the lack of adequate skilled personnel in the civil registration are challenges that must be addressed immediately.

Improving the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Services in Somalia is a crucial task that cannot be achieved without the support of our international partners. We are immensely grateful for the unwavering financial and technical assistance provided by organizations such as UNICEF, UNECA, IOM and UNHCR. Their contributions have been instrumental in enabling us to achieve the progress we are proud to present at this Steering Committee meeting. We remain committed to strengthening our partnership with these and other organisations so that we can continue to work towards a CRVS system in Somalia that meets global standards.

3. WHAT ARE THE MAIN AGENDA OF THE MEETING?

The following will be focused and discussed during the Steering Committee's meeting:

- a. report on the current status of Somalia's civil registration and vital statistics sector, as well as notable accomplishments made in 2023;
- b. the draft five-year strategic plan for the civil registration and vital statistics sector.
- c. Annual work plan of civil registration and vital statistics for 2024
- d. Launch of the online civil registration and vital statistics system; and
- e. Mobilization of adequate resources for the implementation of the annual work plan.

4. WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING?

The following are the expected outcomes from the Steering Committee's meeting:

- a. to lobby the approval and enactment of the civil registration and vital statistics draft law in the Federal Parliament;
- b. approval of the national strategy of 2023 -2028;
- c. approval of annual work plan for 2024.
- d. Operationalization of the first phase of electronic civil registration and vital statistics system; and
- e. approval of resource mobilisation plan to be contributed by government institutions at federal and state levels as well as international partners.