



Global Affairs
Canada



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

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How can we strengthen CRVS systems as a means to improving gender equality?

**19 July 18:15 – 19:30
UN Conference room 12**

Context

Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems are an important source of administrative data on vital statistics, providing information on the vital events occurring to the entire population and is comparable across time and space and allows for disaggregation at the lowest level of geography and by age and sex. It is the only source of universal and continuous demographic and health data that has the potential to provide information for multiple sectors (e.g., health, education, labor, social welfare, etc.) and help local and national governments to plan the provision of public services, design development programs, and assess whether these have met their intended objectives. A well-functioning CRVS system registers all births, deaths, marriages, divorces and adoptions; issues the relevant certificates; and compiles and disseminates vital statistics, including cause of death information.

Many of the SDGs will need reliable population data which can be drawn from a complete CRVS system and from which many relevant indicators can be generated. However, many CRVS systems remain incomplete and inadequate thus reducing the availability of data on vital events and undermining the value of vital statistics that can be used to inform and transform national policies and programs. UNICEF (2013) estimates for example, that 35% of births in the world go unregistered, undermining children's rights to an identity, name and nationality – that is up to 50 million unregistered children born each year that legally do not exist. These children, in turn, have no access to basic rights such as education and health care and are invisible when important policies are put into place. Later on, this lack of registration can have disproportionately high repercussions. For example, it can lead to difficulty in obtaining employment or access to social services. Women are especially affected by the repercussions of not being registered – they will not have access to a national ID card will in turn be denied the right to open a bank account, vote or inherit property for example. If a mother is not registered, it is far less likely that her children will be registered; creating a vicious cycle of official invisibility, lack of opportunity and poverty.

CRVS systems, with their individual-level information, are widely recognized as the best source of data for monitoring maternal mortality and population dynamics, which are key evidence bases for policies that empower and offer a better future for women and girls. Currently however, there is insufficient data to build a baseline for many of the indicators, including for Goal 5 and across other goals that are relevant to women and girls' lives, and this will need to be improved if we want to reduce and properly measure inequality.

Over the past few years, the CRVS agenda has gained much attention and momentum as witnessed by the establishment of the Global Financing Facility, greater investment by countries like Canada and Norway and apparent interest and linkages with the health sector. However, as discussed in a

recent seminar held at the [Center for Global Development](#), seeing the importance of CRVS systems through a gender lens has only started, and requires much improvement. In this context, PARIS21, alongside the Republic of the Philippines, Global Affairs Canada, UN Economic Commission for Africa and Data2X, are pleased to use the opportunity of the High-Level Political Forum to host an event to dig deeper into the challenges, opportunities and solutions to strengthening CRVS systems as a means to improving gender equality.

Objectives

- Highlight gender issues within CRVS systems, and the importance of designing these systems with a gender lens
- Showcase positive examples and innovations at the national and regional level for countries and partners to strengthen CRVS systems
- Identify initiatives and partnership arrangements to strengthen CRVS systems and achieve gender equality.

Draft Agenda

Time	Title	Speaker
18:15 – 18:20	Welcome and Introduction	Johannes Jütting, Manager, PARIS21
18:20 – 18:30	Keynote Speech	Karina Gould, Parliamentary Secretary, Global Affairs Canada
18:30 – 19:00	Panel Discussion	<p>Moderator: Johannes Jütting, Manager, PARIS21</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <p>Lisa Grace Bersales, National Statistician and Civil Registrar General, Philippine Statistics Authority</p> <p>Emily Pryor, Senior Director, Data2X</p> <p>Oliver J.M. Chinganya, Director of the African Centre for Statistics, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)</p>
19:00 – 19:25	Open discussion and questions for panellists	
19:25 – 19:30	Summary and Closing	Johannes Jütting, Manager, PARIS21