

Wayward or Forward? Civil Registration, National IDs and Voter Registration

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Status and Trends

- Prior to 2000, limited improvement in civil registration
 - **35% of U-5 unregistered, 230 m**
- In Africa, birth registration improved slightly from **45% to 53%** in the 2000s
 - **90% of the improvement in 5** countries only: Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Niger, Tanzania
 - However, number unregistered children U-5 unchanged at **85m**
 - **2 in 3** African countries have stagnating birth registration, or a decline in part or all of the 2000s
 - **Only 16 of 55** African countries report basic vital statistics to UN, some with a time-lag of up to 10 years
- **2 in 3** African countries introduce or upgrade their **ID systems**; they account for **>80%** of the African population and **>90%** of African GDP
- **Elections** more often – **biometric voter registration** more costly

IDs, biometric voter registration?

Successful when civil registration isn't?

IDs: Different from Civil Registration

- **Economics** - in virtually no country can ID-issuance be as close to the public as civil registration is (cf. South Africa: only 1 in 5 offices)
- **ID issuance:** requires Internet connectivity, hardware, highly-trained staff and security measures
- **Civil registration**, unlike an ID system, covers the registration of all vital events (births, deaths, incl. cause of death, marriages, divorces, adoptions, etcetera); civil registration generates vital statistics
- **Issuance of ID is like issuance birth certificate**, but done in a much less conducive environment: important role for the health sector for civil registration (notification birth and death)

Comparative Costs (per capita)

- **US\$ 1 to US\$ 4/cap:**
 - Civil registration investment required for sustained improvement
- **US\$ 5/cap:**
 - election costs, of which 60%
- **US\$ 3/cap:**
 - cost voter registration
 - Election observation missions recommend biometrics, e.g. Malawi
- **US\$ 9/cap:**
 - National ID cost - at least (example South Africa)
- Example 2013 elections in **Kenya: US\$ 17/voter** versus **Germany US\$ 1.36/voter: 12.5 times** as expensive

Sequencing Matters - Civil Registration before ID

How It Can Be Done: The South Africa Model

- **From 30%** birth registration 1998 to **>90%** 2012; death registration similar: timeliness, completeness and accuracy achieved in vital statistics
- **Political will**
 - Post-Apartheid, inclusive citizenship, rights-based constitution
 - **765 service points** (including mobile) = **10 births + deaths/day/service point**; ca. **10,000 staff**, i.e. budget sufficiency
- **Incentives**
 - No fee, unless replacement certificate
 - Child support grant **US\$ 31/m/child**, means-tested from 1998, only when birth child and caregiver are registered/have ID (6 months given)
 - Strong civil society advocacy for universal access to CSG
 - Death registration incentives: inheritance, estate, undertaker license
- **Interoperability – for example**
 - Health: birth registration in hospitals (90% institutional delivery)

How It Can Be Done: The South Africa Model

Interoperability: Civil registration-National ID

- Smart ID launch, **AFTER** civil registration completeness reached
- New ID issued **over period of eight (8) years**
- ID only issued when birth registered, free at 16 (US\$ 14 replacement)
- New ID issuance now in **3**, in future in **140 offices** (not in all civil registration offices)

ICT

- Homegrown National Population Register (“HANIS”) serves both ID issuance and civil registration, and authentication in online offices
- **One ministry** responsible for both

Recommendations from Preliminary Findings for Africa

- Current strong push for biometric pathway (“leapfrogging”):
 - national ID to replace civil registration, but
- ID-pathway prohibitively expensive and unsustainable, and may result in unreliable systems and high secondary costs:
 - political instability (IDs not trusted for elections), mutual distrust between countries (IDs not trusted as travel documents), and
- CR-pathway:
 - national IDs and elections can, in stead, be delivered at reasonable cost and with required reliability when civil registration investments are done first (example South Africa), however
- If IDs (and biometric voter registration) predate civil registration completeness, improve civil registration with data from ID system

“...some of the poorest countries in the world have chosen some of the most expensive electoral processes and technology...”