

The Future for Women and Children: UNICEF and WHO Joint Statement on Strengthening Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)

February 2018

Background

Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems serve as the means through which fundamental human rights can be realized.

CRVS is critical for women and children. The Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents Health 2016-2030 calls for expansion of civil registration and vital statistics systems to increase access to services and entitlements; in order for women and children to realize their rights to proper health care, education and basic social benefits, including housing and social protection.



CRVS systems are also critical to the 2030 development goals across the life-course, with 15 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals using indicators which require high quality CRVS data. For countries, a fully functioning CRVS system also generates important information which is a prerequisite to socioeconomic planning and informed decision-making, enabling governments to monitor key demographic and health indicators, including infant, child and maternal, and adult mortality, and target resources and interventions by geography and population group.

In short, CRVS systems are critical to future development.

The health sector is crucial in securing long term improvements to CRVS systems.

Disparities in maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health represent a major barrier to sustained progress towards every woman and child's right to survive and thrive. Data about who is being left behind and how programs are reaching or failing to reach those in greatest need is a key principle of equitable development. The improved coverage of health systems and programs for all populations will support addressing equity concerns in access to health care services.

Innovative approaches and technologies applied as part of health programs, including digital tools and analytics, have the potential to rapidly scale up the notification, registration and certification of births and deaths and to improve the availability and quality of vital statistics. Health systems therefore offer the potential to leverage programs, services and interventions such as immunization and maternal/newborn health care for the notification and registration of births and deaths, as well as improve general registration and cause of death ascertainment.

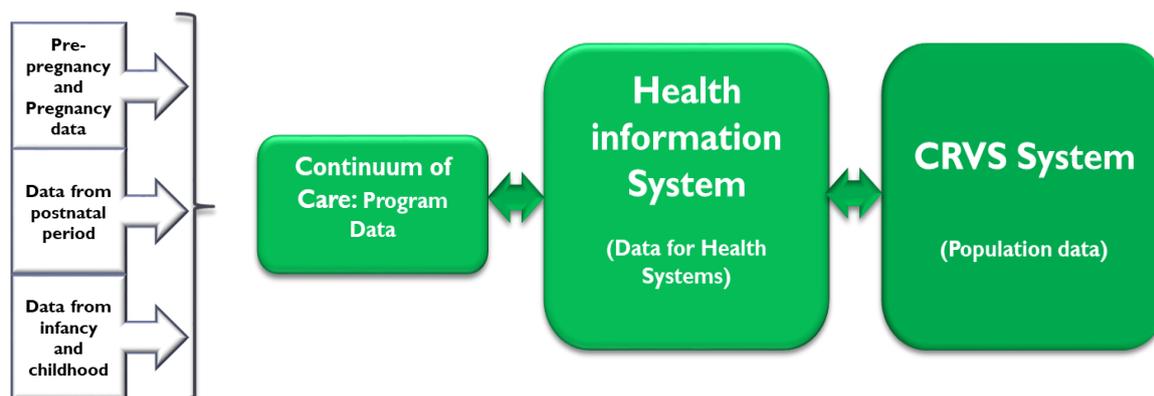
Our Statement:

In line with our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and vulnerable populations, especially women and children, UNICEF and WHO will work together with governments and partners to strengthen Civil Registration and Vital statistics (CRVS) systems.



To achieve this, UNICEF and WHO will:

- 1. Lead with joint strength:** We will build on our respective strengths to support countries to develop and implement evidence-based strategies that address the health and development needs of women and children, especially during the crucial times of pregnancy, births, and childhood, and that contribute to scaling up CRVS systems;
- 2. Collaborate for innovation:** We will collaborate in the introduction and assessment of innovative approaches, including new tools and technologies, and support linkages between CRVS and interventions for women and children and all populations across the continuum of care;
- 3. Advocate for equity:** We will advocate to countries, development partners, donors and civil society the critical role of CRVS systems in addressing the health and development needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations.



And will take action in:

- **Sharing expertise:** We will share information, data and technical expertise to maximize efficiency of resources and generate synergies and cost savings from well designed, integrated programmes and guidance;
- **Reaching Out:** We will work together along with our health and multisectoral partners to strengthen information systems, including CRVS, so that no one is left behind or uncounted;
- **Learning:** We will learn from experiences in countries to enhance coordination and linkages between health programmes and CRVS systems;
- **Mobilising:** We will jointly mobilise human, technical and financial resources to support CRVS systems strengthening as part of actions to reach every woman and every child with key life-saving interventions;
- **Linking:** We will work together to ensure our work around Maternal Death Surveillance and response (MDSR) including perinatal deaths, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, pregnancy registries, immunization registries, health management information systems, registration and verbal autopsy, etc. be increasingly linked to CRVS systems through interoperable data management systems.

We invite other health partners to share this commitment