PART II

Regional Workshop on Enhancing Birth Registration:

Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste
Following preparation of the Situation Analysis of birth registration in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati, a three-day Regional Workshop on Enhancing Birth Registration in the Pacific was held at the Jovili Moe Mission Centre, Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji from 25-27th May, 2005. The workshop was organised and sponsored by UNICEF in conjunction with WHO, SPC, and UNFPA. It brought together participants from seven Pacific countries: Fiji, Kiribati; Samoa, Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu and Vanuatu; and Timor Leste, and representatives from JICA and PLAN International and the sponsoring agencies. The draft Situation Analysis was used as a resource document for the workshop.

The workshop was opened by representatives of UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO. Ms. Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF Pacific Representative, noted in her opening remarks that “A child who is not registered at birth is in danger of being shut out of society and can face discrimination, be subject to child labour, trafficking, conscription and lack of access to basic services such as health and education”. The full texts of her remarks is in the Annex. There were also short presentations by Dr Najib Assifi, UNFPA Pacific Representative, Dr Juliet Fleischl, WHO, Dr Chris McMurray, the Technical Advisor and Dr Miliakere Kaitani, the Facilitator.

The first workshop session comprised presentations on birth registration processes in the eight countries, and the major obstacles preventing complete coverage. It began with a report from the Technical Advisor on some common issues she had observed in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu while preparing the Situation Analysis presented in the first part of this volume. The six issues she highlighted were:

1) Confusion between ‘birth registration’ and ‘birth recording’. There is no cross-country consistency in the names of the documents handed out in connection with births. For example, the widely used term ‘birth certificate’ can refer to various documents. This lack of consistency in the terminology has contributed to confusion among both officials and communities, both within countries and internationally.
2) The birth registration legislation in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is now out of date, and substantial revisions are needed in these and some other Pacific countries to reflect present needs and technology.

3) The birth registration systems of Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu tend to be more efficient in urban than in rural areas.

4) Lack of awareness of the importance of birth registration is widespread among both officials and the general community. This includes undervaluing birth registration as a right, as a source of social benefits and as contributing to accurate information for planners.

5) Undervaluing birth registration leads to lack of timeliness or failure to register entirely. Many births are not registered until proof of age is needed for a specific purpose such as school enrolment or to obtain another official document such as a passport while others may never be registered.

6) It is common for officials to accept documents other than birth registration as proof of age, or even to dispense entirely with the need for proof. Failure to insist on production of registration documentation as proof of age contributes to undervaluing and delayed registration.

The eight country delegations then presented reports summarising the registration process and issues in their countries, identifying both country specific and common issues.

Following the country presentations, participants embarked on the major exercise of the workshop. This comprised working in groups to develop proposed country strategies for their own countries. The first step was to identify problems and underlying causes and to prioritise issues. The second step was to recommend interventions, identify target groups, and suggest the sources of support that would be needed. Participants from a different country commented on each draft country strategy. Summaries of the revised and completed proposed strategies were then presented to the meeting by each country. Table A.1 below summarises the main issues identified in the eight country strategies, and the number of countries that mentioned each main issue. The background presentations made by each country delegation also appear in the next section of this workshop report.

Interspersed throughout the workshop were three other presentations. On the second afternoon there were two presentations. Dr Victor Karunan of the UNICEF Head Office in New York gave a global perspective on birth registration. His presentation emphasised the importance of birth registration as a rights issue, and set out details of UNICEF’s strategic plans on birth registration for 2002-2005 and 2006-2009. The strategy for the first phase is to target birth registration under the Integrated Early Childhood Development strategy and to link immunization and child protection ‘to promote more effective birth registration of children in highly disadvantaged groups and families or in geographical areas with the worst social indicators’.
The strategy for the second phase is to make birth registration a target under Child Protection ‘free and compulsory registration of births with focus on excluded groups and communities, strengthening of birth registration systems and advocating for free and compulsory birth registration’.

Dr Karunan listed details of the strategy and key partnerships and highlighted the key issues of lack of political will, little perceived value of registration, weak systems and low community involvement. After briefly reviewing the implications and consequences for unregistered children, he made eight recommendations on the way forward:

- Legislation for compulsory registration of births
- Free birth registration
- Time limits and penalties
- Integration with service delivery systems
- Decentralization
- Awareness-raising, advocacy and communications
- Community participation, including children and youth
- Partnerships for birth registration

His presentation concluded with some examples of innovative strategies to improve birth registration in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Bangladesh, Uganda and Armenia.

This was followed by two presentations on examples of successful registration strategies. Mr Sitiveni Nabuka, from the Fiji Government, demonstrated Fiji’s computerised registration system. A key feature of this system is that it enables tracking of a potential registration from the time the mother’s pregnancy is recorded in the health system until the registration is completed. The full text of this presentation and examples of the software interactive screens are presented in Section Two of this workshop summary.

Mr Shabir Ahmed from PLAN International gave a presentation on the strategy used to increase birth registration coverage in Cambodia. At the core of this strategy was strong political commitment at all levels, community education, deferred fees and mobile registration centres. The full presentation is in Section Two.

After the country strategy presentations by Pacific and Timorese delegates, the Technical Adviser made a brief concluding presentation on the next steps and the way forward. She emphasised common barriers of low awareness, lack of commitment and political will, and relaxed attitudes to birth registration, and urged every participant to become a missionary for birth registration and promote it among their colleagues with enthusiasm so as to win support and raise awareness.
There were two main speakers at the closing of the workshop, Dr Victor Karunan of UNICEF and Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Senior Deputy-Director-General of SPC. Both underlined the importance of birth registration as a child right and a community obligation. Dr Rodgers suggested that there might be an opportunity to include promotion of birth registration in the Pacific Plan. Summaries of their informal addresses are in Part C of the ANNEX.

The workshop concluded with a vote of thanks from Dr Thaneoke –Myint, Programme Officer, of the UNICEF Suva Office. He thanked everyone who had participated and urged them to sustain their enthusiasm for birth registration, and especially commended UNICEF staff member Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux for organising this workshop. The workshop closed at 1.00 pm on Friday 27\textsuperscript{th} May.

**Objectives**

- To develop a better understanding of the status of birth registration in Pacific Island Countries (PICs).
- Development of country strategies to improve birth registration systems and practices in the PICs.

**Expected Outcomes**

- Enhanced understanding of the importance of birth registration including child rights, access to public services and national planning.
- Shared and reviewed information on the current systems and practices of birth registration in the Pacific.
- Recommended birth registration country strategies
Highlights of Opening and Closing Remarks

Ms Gillian Mellsop, Representative UNICEF Pacific
For every child to reach his or her full potential in societies that respect peoples rights and dignity, obtaining an identity and nationality through birth registration is necessary.

Mr Najib M. Assifi, Representative UNFPA
Without a birth certificate, children are denied basic human rights such as education, health care, and protection. Furthermore, birth registration clearly identifies the parents of the child and legally obligates the parents and the state to provide care and protection for the child and contribute to his or her welfare and personal development.

Dr Juliet Fleishl, Technical Officer in Human Resources and Health Systems, WHO
Unregistered citizens are invisible for policy and planning purposes and when we are dealing with figures such as 50 million unregistered children worldwide, it is cause for concern. Lack of registration can exacerbate poverty and increase the extent of marginalisation.

Dr Jimmie Rogers, Senior Deputy Director-General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Why not create a Regional Registrars Association that links up all the registrars in your individual countries under the context of the Pacific Plan which would allow you a platform to share information on the 3 areas (birth, marriage and death) that you look after.

Dr Victor Karunan, Senior Advisor, Adolescent Development and Participation, UNICEF Headquarters
Ownership in the countries, ownership among governments, to take the lead in working on this priority issue and to mobilise support for it. As UN, as donors, as international organisations we are here to support; to provide assistance to your plans, to your efforts and to help you move forward in the direction your societies want to go.

Full text of the opening remarks and the summaries of closing remarks included in the Annex.
Chapter One: Country Presentations and Proposed Strategies

THE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM OPERATING IN FIJI
Presented by Mrs. Laite Matadigo, Registrar General

1. Introduction

Fiji was ceded to Great Britain in 1874 and from that time Fiji became a British Colony. As such Fiji’s laws and administration systems follow closely the systems in the British Colonies Overseas. This is also true for the system of registration of births, deaths and marriages. The early legislations and the 1975 Births, Deaths and Marriages Act [Cap.49] are modelled along the same lines. Registration of births, deaths and marriages is a legal requirement under the 1975 Births, Deaths and Marriages Act. This Act has remained substantially the same until today. Fees charged under the Act were reviewed in July, 2000.

2. Births, Deaths and Marriages Act [BDM Act]

The BDM Act establishes the Office of the Registrar and specifies the Registrar’s functions and duties. The Registrar is responsible for all matters pertaining to registration under the Act in Fiji; including safe keeping of records and issuing of certificates when required. The Registrar is empowered to appoint Divisional and District Registrars and to assist her/him in implementing the registration functions. Other duties include the appointment or Marriage Officers.

In Fiji there is also a unique function of the Registrar, to inform the Chairman of the Native Land Commission a statutory body which registers “Owners” of Native Lands, of the names of indigenous Fijians registered each year so that the Commission can check its own records and update them if necessary. I will now highlight the main provisions of Births Registration.

3. Registering of Births in Fiji

Duty of Parent or Occupier to Register Birth

It is the responsibility of both parents to register the birth of a child. In the case of death, illness or inability of father and mother, any person present at the birth or the occupier of the house may register the birth. In the case of a child born and admitted to a public institution or charitable or religious institution, it is the duty of the person in charge of the institution to ascertain from the mother of the child, the information and particulars required to be registered concerning the birth. For a new born child found abandoned, it is the duty of the Social Welfare Department and hospital to register the birth.
4. **How to register a birth**

Under the Fiji Health Laws, all expectant mothers are required to have their child delivered in a hospital, where a Notification of Birth Slip will be issued to the mother by the Nurse/Doctor to confirm the child's birth.

The Notification of Birth Slip is the legal and major supporting documentary evidence of a birth produced by parents when registering a birth at the Registry. Without the birth slip other personal documents such as a baptismal card or health card may be produce as birth evidence.

All major hospitals in Suva, Lautoka and Labasa are linked with the BDM Computer Networking System and births occurring in these institutions are directly entered into the system for registration purposes.

Registration forms must be completed and signed by the parents or informants in the presence of the Registry Clerk.

5. **Time limit in birth registration**

It is required that children must be registered within two months of the birth. Registration of birth made after the expiration of two months is required to be made by a solemn declaration to the best of the declarants' knowledge and belief in the truth of the particulars required to be registered. Registration is free at this point and a birth certificate is automatically issued if required, for the prescribed fee.
6. **Late Birth Registration [12 Months]**
After the expiration of twelve months from the date of birth of a child, the Act provides a penalty fee for failing to register a child within the time limit of one year.

7. **Registration of Name of Child or Addition of Name[s]**
After registration the child’s parents may add to the name of a child whose birth has been registered with one name or without a name. Only one addition of name is allowed for each person under this section.

8. **Registration of Change of Name**
Any person who has attained the age of twenty one (21) years or is married may by deed poll change his or her name, whether a surname or forenames. The parents of any child who has not attained the age of 21 years and has never married may by deed poll change the name of the child.

A Deed Poll document is normally prepared by a solicitor and must be first registered in the Stamp Duties Office before filing with the Registrar of Deeds. The Registrar is required by law to register change of name on the original entry.

Every certificate or certified copy issued thereafter will show the name as changed and no other name. The Law is silent at this point on the time frame as well as number of times a person can change his/her name under this section.

9. **Addition of Father’s Particulars**
A child born to a single parent normally registers under the care of the mother. However if a person acknowledges and accepts paternity of the child they may apply upon mother’s approval and endorsement for addition of father’s particulars, to re-register the child under his name. A separate statutory declaration is to be completed by the person declaring that he is the natural father. He may add his family name to the child’s name if he wishes to do so.

10. **Correction of Error**
There are provisions in the Act for correction of error of fact or substance in births registrations. The applicant is required to declare the nature of the error and the true facts of the case in the prescribed form prior to the correction being processed.

11. **Records office**
Records are maintained manually and are kept in bound volumes of fifty registrations. Apart from computerized data, these records provide our main back up information in the registry.
12. **Office Structure**

The Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages is responsible to the Chief Executive Officer for Justice under the Ministerial portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice on the civil registration issues and matters pertaining to Births Deaths and Marriages in accordance with Cap.49, 50 of the Act.

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages consists of the three main Divisional Registries, fourteen [14] District Registrars and twenty five [25] Assistant District Registrars

13. **Birth Registration at the Periphery**

Under the BDM Laws, it is compulsory that births must be registered within two months. The Birth Registration Certification has been a major source of population information in Fiji ever since the Colonial era. Communities understand the importance of having births registered because of its relevance to the various institutions and agencies such as schools, sports facilities, hospitals, banks, immigration, Native Land Ownership Registry, courts, police, Bureau of Statistics and the private and public workforce.

Birth Registries are available in all centres. There are three Divisional Offices, 14 District Registries and 18 Assistant District Registries catering for birth registration needs in Fiji. About 70% of the total births occurring in each year are registered within the desired time frame, while 28% are registered as late births and 2% of the population is not registered due to unavoidable circumstances.

14. **Main Obstacles**

(1) *Procrastination* is one of the problems regarding registration of children in Fiji, particularly for Fijians. They have a unique way of taking things lightly and delaying until an occasion arises that requires registration of the child.
(2) **Accessibility** – Villages, especially on remote islands, are not privileged to be acquainted with the BDM computerized system. This arises because of financial constraints and isolates them from the centre of operation.

(3) **The Legislation** – is inadequate and has flaws that need to be reviewed to accommodate the many problems arising outside our legislation, in particular:

- Identity theft;
- Acquisition of birth certificates by non Fijians for obtaining passports and visas;
- Acquisition of birth certificates through change of name by those who have been deported from overseas;
- Need to upgrade security features in the certification process (paper/ seal) to avoid tampering/ falsifying certificates;
- Section 26 of the BDM Act provides acceptance of birth certificates as true and correct information that shall be received in all courts as evidence of the birth, and all particulars contained therein recorded without requiring further proof of the matter;
- Need to ensure the integrity of the system and most importantly to;
- Maintain networking between agencies (Health, Immigration, Police, Overseas Missions in Fiji and BDM Registry)

15. **Computerization**

Our computerization Network Project was initially installed to boost the efficiency and consistency of our service locally. The Network was engineered by a Steering Committee in 1996 that involved input of some Government Departments such as the Public Service Commission [PSC], Information Technology and Computing Services [ITC], Immigration Department, Health and Bureau of Statistics. The project has successfully captured all data on Births, Deaths and Marriages as from 1877 in its Network System. On line registration system for Births, Deaths and Marriages are now linked and running well. This modern technology in our department has elevated our services to another dimension – and now we meet the demands of the members of the public in a more professional manner.

16. **Conclusion**

As Registrar in Fiji, I see my task as very challenging because of rapid social and economic development in Fiji. Fiji is part of the Global Village and we need to adjust: to review our legislation, our processes and, more importantly, the adoption of modern technology to enable us to cope with the demands imposed on us by increasing population; problems brought in by new settlers in Fiji – particularly the influx of Chinese and Asian immigrants – trans-national organized crime and other related problems. As a developing country, Fiji has limited resources and Government has to prioritise its development programs. Although, in my view, the role of the Registrar is vital, unfortunately the needs of the Office does not always attract a priority rating. This in itself is a challenge, as we must utilize available resources effectively and for the benefit for the citizens generally.
## Proposed Fiji Country Strategies for Enhancing Birth Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Objectives</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand access to computerisation</td>
<td>increase computer network obtain necessary computers train users</td>
<td>Rural Community</td>
<td>Obtain approval from PSC to hire more staff Obtain office space</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>UNICEF, JICA, AUSAID, NZODA, WHO, UNFPA, ITC Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness raising</td>
<td>conduct workshops at District Levels IEC materials Daily vernacular newspapers</td>
<td>Rural community, Youths, Adolescents</td>
<td>Prepare readable, acceptable, understood materials Identify specialists to prepare materials</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>UNICEF, JICA, AUSAID, NZODA, WHO, UNFPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring proper security of all records</td>
<td>store records offsite in other countries</td>
<td>Everybody who has been registered</td>
<td>obtain cooperation from other country to be stored in obtain funding for creating microfilms of all current birth records ensure that proper security measures are in place for accessibility</td>
<td>Short, recurring</td>
<td>AUSAID, UNICEF, ITC Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Cap 49/50 of Laws in Fiji</td>
<td>Identify sections that need to be reviewed Submit recommendations</td>
<td>Legal people, NLC</td>
<td>identify incentives to be incorporated in the Act for BR. Collaborate with other stakeholders</td>
<td>Mid Term</td>
<td>Min. of Justice, NLC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Possible Resources for Funding/Support**
- UNICEF, JICA, AUSAID, NZODA, WHO, UNFPA, ITC Services
BIRTH REGISTRATION IN KIRIBATI

Presented by Ms Tienti Teea, Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Kiribati Background

- The population of Kiribati was estimated at 100,798 in 2004, giving the country a population density of 141 persons per square kilometre (364 per square mile).
- Kiribati has a total land area of 811 kilometre (313 square miles).
- The islands extend across or straddle the equator.
- Kiribati’s exclusive economic zone (area of the ocean in which it controls fishing and other rights) covers more than 3 million square kilometre (more than 1 million square miles).
- The economy of Kiribati is based mainly on agriculture, fishing and subsistence activities.

Trends in Birth Registration in Kiribati

- By law under Act (Cap 5 1997) all births are required to be registered with the Registrar General’s office in South Tarawa and at the Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands on Christmas Island.
- In the Outer Islands births are required to be registered with the Island Council Office.
- It is the responsibility of every citizen to submit details of the birth to the designated office within the time allowed.
- It is the duty of every registrar from the Outer Islands to send copies of registrations every quarter (in the months of January, April, July and October) to the Registrar General’s Office.
- Birth registration must be made within 10 days of the birth, otherwise a $4.00 late fee will be charged.
- The Act (Cap 5) states that registration is free of charge before the expiration of 3 months.
- Issue of certificates and duplicates cost $3.00.

How birth registration is regarded by the community

- Birth registration is regarded as very important.
- It is also regarded as very bureaucratic.
- Birth registration is regarded as time-consuming and costly (especially for remote Outer Island populations).

Main obstacles preventing complete coverage

- Lack of funds for staff to collect register events on Outer Islands.
- Isolation of Outer Island prevents regular submission of registered events due to the lack of transport. Island Council Clerks may be late sending quarterly returns.
- The legislation is poorly enforced and the public is not well informed of the requirements of birth registration.
- Lack of centralization & lack of control over Outer Island Registrars (no pay no say).
- Staff are not well trained in proper execution of their tasks.
- There is little inter-department collaboration, especially between the Ministry of Health and the Civil Registration Office.
- Lack of awareness and lack of understanding of birth registration among both the community and officials.
### Proposed Kiribati Country Strategies for Enhancing Birth Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Objectives</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>How/Steps</th>
<th>Duration (Long/Short term)</th>
<th>Possible Resources for Funding/Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Legislation</td>
<td>Move the concerned Government Department to review the existing legislation and change it according to the ground realities</td>
<td>Attorney General CRO Island Councils</td>
<td>Analyze the existing law Identify the required changes Consult with Island Councils Share findings with Attorney General’s Office Request incorporating the amendments</td>
<td>Short/Long Term</td>
<td>Legal expert Field visit to some Islands to get feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Do a need-assessment to ascertain the required number of people</td>
<td>Civil Registration Office</td>
<td>Assess the number of officials required Define the criteria for selection Define terms and conditions</td>
<td>Short/Long Term</td>
<td>Funding according to the number of people required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>Training on civil registration laws and procedures</td>
<td>Registration Officials</td>
<td>Prepare a training guide covering laws and procedures Develop understanding on the importance of birth registration Develop planning, monitoring and reporting skills Training on doing public information</td>
<td>Short/long term</td>
<td>Technical expertise Financial support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics/Material</td>
<td>Do a need assessment according to implementation plan and ensure the required logistic and material support</td>
<td>Civil Registration Office</td>
<td>Prepare a logistics plan according to the Plan of Action (Registration books, blank certificates, stationery) Identify sources for arranging logistics Safe storage of registration documents Equipments (computers, electronic typewriters, safes)</td>
<td>Short/Long Term</td>
<td>Financial resources Plan of Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Information/Awareness</td>
<td>Develop a comprehensive and relevant public information/communication plan</td>
<td>Kiribati population</td>
<td>Identify a the right of kind media (TV, radio, newspapers, posters, billboards, banners, songs, announcements, drama groups) Develop messages according to local needs and requirements</td>
<td>Long term</td>
<td>Technical and financial support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaching the Remote Areas</td>
<td>Mobile registration</td>
<td>Population in remote areas</td>
<td>Develop a mobile registration plan of action Identify areas Identify resources Training on mobile registration Identify potential support system at the community level and other organizations</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Technical and financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-ministerial Collaboration</td>
<td>Define the support required from other ministries and department</td>
<td>Ministry of Health Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports-Civil Registration Office</td>
<td>Develop understanding and integrate birth registration in the activities of health ministry- Educate and mobilize population through teachers, youth groups, students and sports clubs under the M/O Education, Youth and Sports Formalize the Committee of inter-ministerial collaboration</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>Interaction with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in order to develop common understanding around the issue of birth registration</td>
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</table>
1. **History**
Samoa was colonised by Germany from 1900 until 1914 and by New Zealand from 1914 until 1961. It became Independent on 1st January 1962.

*Pre-1962* there were two systems of Birth Registration, one for foreigners and one for Samoans. The European registers were well kept and maintained with full details of birth records. The Samoan registers were somewhat incomplete and neglected.

2. **Post 1962**
Since 1962 there has been only one register for all Samoans. Initially the system operated as follows:

   a. **Informants**
   Village mayors were the main source of birth details. The mayors were created by the New Zealand authorities and are still one of the main sources of birth information. The birth records from the hospital were also used, but mainly for Europeans and foreigners. Baptismal certificates were also accepted at that time and are still acceptable today.

   b. **Recording**
   The birth details of a child were recorded directly into the handwritten register and signed by the village mayor and sometimes the parents. Later the details were also recorded on index cards and filed according to place of birth.

   c. **Late Registration**
   Birth registration was for specific reasons and not regarded as essential or a right. This created a lot of problems, especially with overseas agencies, both in the past and now.

   d. **Legislation**
   The original 1961 Registration Ordinance was repealed in 2002 and replaced with the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act of 2002, later supplemented by Regulation 2004.

3. **The Current System**
- Birth registration in Samoa starts at the place of birth through notification using regulated means.
- Places of birth include Health Care Centres/hospitals and villages
- Whether a child is born in a health facility or in the village, the birth notification must have the following information:
  - Date of birth
  - Place of birth
  - Live/still birth
  - Names of natural parents or mother if a one-parent child
- Means of notification
  - Hospitals use electronic means
  - Villages use the B10 form and the responsible person is either the village mayor or an appointed women’s village representative
· Birth notifications are sufficient proof for registration only up to three months from the date of birth.
· After three months the acceptable birth supporting documents are baptismal certificates, child immunization cards, confirmation letters from the Church or an official hospital notification.

4. Registration
· Births can only be registered by the child’s natural parents. If they are married, then a Marriage Certificate must be produced. Then either one of the parents can sign the registration form in order to obtain a birth certificate.
· If the parents are not married, both must sign the form. If a single parent insists on doing the registration, then that parent’s name is recorded in the birth record and the birth certificate (refer to the Act, Section 19).
· As it is governed by the Act of 2002, birth registration is now compulsory. However, there are still children and adults whose births have not been registered. The percentage is probably not significant. I estimate about 0.1 per cent of the total population of 174,000 in 2001.

5. Obstacles
Obstacles are not so much coverage but cultural elements that hinder the registration of correct information. For example, the grandparents of children born out of wedlock tend to register these children under their own names.
There is no such thing as a cultural adoption in the Act.
The computerised registration system went ‘live’ in November 2002, and was funded by NZAID. The computerised system has many features that assist us to detect false registrations.

6. Conclusion
Birth registration in Samoa is at an advanced stage. The legal framework is in place and also the mechanism, but there is still a need to continuously educate the parents as to their responsibilities to their children, through an awareness programme.
## Proposed Samoa Country Strategies for Enhancing Birth Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Objectives</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>How/Steps</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computerisation of Savaii</td>
<td>Install the C-BR system by 30 June 2005</td>
<td>Savaii BDM Staff</td>
<td>Computerisation&lt;br&gt;Initial installation by technical advisor&lt;br&gt;Training of staff&lt;br&gt;Initial training by technical advisor&lt;br&gt;Ongoing training by MoF IT staff</td>
<td>Immediate (by 16 June 2005)&lt;br&gt;Long term</td>
<td>MoF&lt;br&gt;Samoa Government (local cost)&lt;br&gt;NZAID (additional costs – likely to be willing because funded computerization of BDM and have an interest in integrity of system because of increased immigration)&lt;br&gt;AusAID (also expressed interest in the integrity of system)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness raising for community</td>
<td>Awareness raising activities – develop, implement and evaluate</td>
<td>Parents&lt;br&gt;Regulated informants&lt;br&gt;Church Ministers&lt;br&gt;Youth&lt;br&gt;Stakeholders</td>
<td>Develop a plan (when, who – in each village) in consultation with regulated informants and MWCD&lt;br&gt;Consult with CEO of MWCD&lt;br&gt;Consult with church leaders&lt;br&gt;Consult with church youth leaders&lt;br&gt;Prepare submission to Cabinet for approval&lt;br&gt;Use evaluation of awareness raising activities to revise materials</td>
<td>July 2005 – June 2006</td>
<td>MWCD and BDM existing staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation of BR</td>
<td>Survey to find out the percentage of BR coverage</td>
<td>Regulated informants&lt;br&gt;Community</td>
<td>Develop survey/questionnaire&lt;br&gt;Consult with informants&lt;br&gt;Review based on consultation&lt;br&gt;Conduct survey&lt;br&gt;Evaluate results&lt;br&gt;Follow up results of survey of informants with community</td>
<td>By end 2005</td>
<td>Support of Minister of Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review/amend legislation</td>
<td>Review BDM legislation, identify weaknesses and propose amendments</td>
<td>MoF Management&lt;br&gt;AG&lt;br&gt;Law Society</td>
<td>Internal Review&lt;br&gt;MoF CEO write to AG outlining proposed amendment&lt;br&gt;AG review and prepare draft amendments – BDM to follow up&lt;br&gt;MoF approval of final draft from AG&lt;br&gt;Minister submits draft amendments to Cabinet approval</td>
<td>By June 2006 (AG has heavy workload)</td>
<td>Support of Minister of Finance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legislation
- The Births & Death (Registration Act) 1993 relates exclusively to registration of indigenous Solomon Islanders.
- Registration of non-indigenous is governed under the Births, Marriages and Death registration Act of 1896

How the community regards Birth Registration
- The community is ignorant about the requirement to register births due to lack of awareness.
- No perceived value in registration
- Current coverage is less than 15% of the population

Obstacles preventing complete coverage
- Lack of awareness of importance of registration; both demand & supply
- There is limited accessibility
- There is limited registration facility
- Lack of inter-Ministry collaboration
- Lack of proper strategy to obtain necessary information

Strategies to improve coverage
- Strengthen the capacity of the Registrar of Births to implement the appropriate Acts.
- Strengthen & improve birth registration mechanism with inter-ministry collaboration and consultation.
- Conduct nationwide survey and enumerate everyone who has not been registered
- Expand health recording of births by strengthening the health information system
- Awareness-raising
## Possible Proposed Solomon Islands Country Strategies for Enhancing Birth Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES/OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
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<th>DURATION (Long/Short term)</th>
<th>POSSIBLE RESOURCES FOR FUNDING/SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revitalisation of birth registration in Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Leading agencies and key stakeholders meeting</td>
<td>DHA, MHMS, MEHR, MNRP, MoE, MJLA, SICA, DSE, UNICEF, SCA</td>
<td>TOR for a more detailed snap shot review of existing situation</td>
<td>three months</td>
<td>SIG, JICA, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birth, deaths and marriage working committee</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identification of other possible donors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review, assessment and collate existing data</td>
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<td>SWOT analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plan of Action</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation plan, priorities and timeframes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Budget outlook for implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of possible donors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sourcing of resources to cover</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BIRTH REGISTRATION IN TIMOR-LESTE
Presented by Mr Mario Ximenes, Head of Civil Registry and Nationality

Background
- Timor-Leste gained its independence on May 20, 002.
- Timor-Leste had a total population of 924,642 in 2004 (Census July 2004).
- Timor-Leste is divided into 13 districts, 65 sub-districts and approximately 450 villages.
- Geographically, Timor-Leste consists of mountains and its population is spread out in rural areas and urban centers.

Birth Registration in Timor-Leste
- In 2000, UNTAET civil registration set up the first civil registration administration.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs established the Central Civil Registry during the same year and started to issue birth, death and marriage certificates.
- Since 2002, the Division of Civil Registry and Notary under the Ministry of Justice has been responsible for birth registration.
- All children (East Timorese citizens and foreigners) have the right to be issued with a birth certificate (UNTAET Reg. 2001/30)

The process of birth registration in Timor Leste
a) Transcription
- Information from existing identification documents is used as evidence for issuing a birth certificate.
- One of the following documents must be presented:
  - Baptism certificate of parents from a religious institution.
  - Identity document from a head of village.
  - Notification of the birth of the child, completed by a competent health worker.

b) Inscription:
Details of individuals with no previous records will be registered.
- Since 2003, the Civil Registry Office of the Ministry of Justice, with support from UNICEF, has conducted mobile registration campaigns in selected districts.

Estimates of coverage
- The level of birth registration of children between 0-95 months is only 22.3%.
- The figure is higher in urban areas (31.5%) and major urban areas (35.5%) than in rural areas (19.5%) (MICS, 2002)
- A number of parallel systems for recording the birth of children are currently in place
- All systems combined, 53% of births in the last five years were recorded in some way (DHS, 2003).
- However, only 9.2% of the children were registered by the civil registry.

The Main Obstacles to complete registration
- Perceptions and low awareness of birth registration.
- Limited accessibility and transport.
- Limited human and financial resources.
- The centralized system at the national level.
### Proposed Timor-Leste Country Strategies for Enhancing Birth Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Objectives</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>How/Steps</th>
<th>Duration (Long/Short term)</th>
<th>Possible Resources for Funding/Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To set-up specific criteria and the process of birth registration</td>
<td>To continue follow-up by Ministry of Justice with the National Parliament</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice, National Division of civil registry and notary</td>
<td>Request for a meeting with related commission of parliament</td>
<td>Immediately after the approval of Civil Registry Code -2005</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build the capacity of civil registry staff at the national and district level</td>
<td>Conduct Training of Trainer to the civil staff at the central level Training of staff at the district level</td>
<td>Civil registry staff central level</td>
<td>Submit funding proposal to Int. organizations Implementation of the training in each district</td>
<td>Immediately after the approval of Civil Registry Code -2005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To disseminate the civil registry code nationwide through use-friendly version of Birth Registration articles</td>
<td>Draft the friendly version of civil registry code specially on the birth registration articles Campaign : Talk show (MOJ, Member of Parliament and related Int. organisation, community, National NGOs), radio and IEC materials</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice, National Division of civil registry and notary and community</td>
<td>Invite the key actors in the area of birth registration Invite Media</td>
<td>6 months after the approval of civil registry code 2005 - 2006</td>
<td>Government, International organizations and community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Status of birth registration in Tonga

- The Chief Justice is the Registrar General, but registrations are done by registrars (in main centres) or magistrates (in outlying areas).
- Registration is governed by The Birth Deaths and Marriages Act, 1926. The 1984 and other amendments mostly relate to fees and procedures, so the legislation is generally dated.
- The Act provides that both legitimate and illegitimate births should be registered within 21 days.
- Most births in Tonga take place in hospitals, which issue a certificate of live birth. Parents are expected to give this certificate to the registrar. Midwives, traditional birth attendants or district lawyers also are required to report live births to the registrar.
- Registration is free, and both Tongans and non-Tongans born in Tonga can register. Separate registers are kept for Tongans and non-Tongans.
- There is provision for a one-year grace period, but this unnecessarily long grace period encourages procrastination and undermines efforts to promote timely registration. From 1 October 2005 the grace period will therefore be reduced. Thereafter registration must take place within three months of birth or within six months on outlying islands.
- There is also provision to report infant deaths, but this is often not done because of cultural resistance. When registrars or sub-registrars are sent to houses to follow up on infant deaths they often encounter resistance and are told they are intruding on private family affairs. There is a need to find a better procedure for registering infant deaths.
- In 2004 coverage was 98 per cent, an improvement from 94 per cent in 2000. Ten years ago it was only 89 per cent. In the mid 1990s there was a UNFPA funded project to encourage and improve birth registration to 100 per cent but this project did not continue when the initial funding came to an end.

Issues

- A Ministerial Committee to promote and oversee birth registration did not function very well because of difficulties of bringing together busy, high-level personnel to attend meetings. Official stakeholders therefore formed their own committee comprising representatives from Health, Prime Ministers Office, Statistics and the Ministry of Justice. This committee is an effective working group that functions well, as the members are directly involved in registration in some way and so can support and assist each other, lobby and exchange ideas. This has led to increased birth registration coverage. The committee is currently working on the design of a new birth certificate.
- Awareness of birth registration is generally high in Tonga as birth certificates need to be produced on many occasions, including education, opening bank accounts, and obtaining passports, and are needed for criminal prosecutions.
- Although some people dislike the requirement, the full birth certificate is required to indicate whether a birth was legitimate or illegitimate. This is for reasons relating to inheritance of land by male heirs, which is a very important issue in Tonga. The short version of the certificate, however, does not show this information.
Birth registration raises issues of citizenship. A Tongan is defined as a person whose father was born in Tonga. Births that occur overseas can be registered on production of evidence, including the overseas birth certificate. But registration does not automatically confer citizenship. Because of the definitions used, some children may be stateless and unable to obtain a passport. For example, if a Tongan woman living in Fiji gives birth to a child fathered by a non-Tongan man. Consideration is currently being given to how to review the Nationality Act to deal with such situations.

Obstacles to achieving 100 per cent coverage

- Procrastination because of an unnecessarily long ‘grace period’ of one year (soon to be shortened).
- If parents fail to register a child they can be prosecuted in court, but as the fine is only $10.00 it is not cost effective to initiate prosecutions. This provision needs to be reviewed so that prosecution becomes feasible and prosecution avoidance becomes an incentive to register.
- Fear of prosecution once the permitted time has elapsed may deter some registrations. This needs to be looked at further as there may be a need for a carrot rather than a stick approach in such situations.
- Some parents still need to be better informed about the importance of registration and the registration process, especially those in more complex situations, such as parents of illegitimate children. There has been on-going publication, and pamphlets are given out by hospitals. A pamphlet has been prepared on illegitimacy.
- Children of a marriage are always assumed to be children of the husband. If this is not the case, special application may need to be made to register the child as illegitimate, because of inheritance laws.
- Procedures for children of Tongans that are born outside Tonga need to be simplified to encourage registration.
- A recent attempt to match health records with registration records resulted in a discrepancy of 600 records. This is being reviewed to establish what caused the discrepancy.
- There is a lack of political will to take the initiative to improve the birth registration system. Any assistance provided usually comes from donors rather than resulting from a systematic and sustained political commitment.
- In cases of customary adoption a child may not be registered because the natural parents assume it is the responsibility of the adoptive parents, and vice versa. This can constitute a problem for the child, so more public education is needed to avoid this situation.
- Sub-registars in the outer islands tend not to be properly advised and trained – because of lack of funding for training and communications.

1 Editor's note: This not unusual, even in countries with well-developed registration systems. For example, recent matching of health and registration records in Australia produced a discrepancy of more than 6,000.
# Proposed Tonga Country Strategies for Enhancing Birth Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES/OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
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<th>DURATION (Long/Short term)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Update legislation</td>
<td>Drafting of New legislation</td>
<td>Justice, Crown Law, Law Revision Committee</td>
<td>Consultation, Bill submitted to law revision committee, Bill processed through House and passed into law</td>
<td>3 months Jan/Feb/Mar</td>
<td>Legal consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness raising</td>
<td>Continuing Media programme (newspaper, Radio, TV, Website), Training for BR office</td>
<td>All level of Gov, Public at large</td>
<td>Media programme prepared and presented Workshop, Guideline, Posters</td>
<td>12 months July 05- July 06</td>
<td>Funding for media programmes and materials, Trainers, Publications (pamphlets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computerization of BR</td>
<td>All birth registration records in electric form, Revise procedure set up</td>
<td>Health, Justice, Statistics</td>
<td>Training for operator, Laying of cables and setting up of hardware, Implementing programmes</td>
<td>3 years in phase I, II, III, IV, V Commence July 06</td>
<td>Hardware, IT expert, Archivist, Consultant (BR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening outer registry &amp; decentralize computerization</td>
<td>Link up outer district registries, Strengthening the capacity of the registry officers</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Install computer connection, Training of registry officer</td>
<td>6 months Sep06 – Feb07</td>
<td>IT expert, Trainers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Possible Resources for Funding/Support**
- Computers
- Legal consultant
- Funding for media programmes and materials
- Trainers
- Publications (pamphlets)
- Hardware
- IT expert
- Archivist
- Consultant (BR)
Status of birth registration in Tuvalu

- Birth registration is required by the Birth Deaths and Marriages Act of 1966 and 1968. There is a substantial difference between legal requirements and reality, however.
- Births should be reported to the Local Government Council within 10 days.
- In Funafuti the parents may choose to register the birth at the Birth Registry head office or with the nearest Local Government Council. In the outer islands all registrations are handled by the Local Government Council, which sends the documentation to the Birth Registry head office in Funafuti at the end of each year.
- For legitimate births the acceptable informants are the mother and father, as well as anyone present at the birth, or a midwife. In the case of an illegitimate child, only the mother’s name needs to appear on the registration, and the father’s name can only be included if both the mother and father consent to this.
- The reality is that many people do not register with Local Government Councils so few registrations are transmitted to Funafuti. Only one outer island is fully up to date with its registrations.

Issues:

- Awareness of the importance of registration is generally low in Tuvalu and few people understand the fees or the penalty for failure to register.
- Nurses do not advise mothers to register births.
- Local Government Councils do not always forward registrations promptly (the records of only one island were up to date at the time of writing).
- Local Government Councils are often late providing details, and may withhold them altogether unless specifically requested.
- In most instances evidence of birth registration is required only to obtain a passport or to attend an overseas school and only requested at such times, so many people never receive documentation of birth registration.
- Tuvaluans born outside Tuvalu cannot be registered in Tuvalu and cannot obtain a Tuvaluan birth certificate. Overseas-born adults who have need of a birth certificate must contact the registrar in their country of birth.
- Late registration from 3 to 12 months after the birth is obtainable for a fee, but in practice no fee is charged.
- The Act states that late registration requires assessment of supporting documentation by an approved assessor, but this requirement also is seldom enforced.
- A birth certificate is issued only if a fee is paid. There are two forms of birth certificate, a long version with full details and a short version with only core information.

Other

- Names can be changed by Deed Poll. Both the new and the old name appear on the certificate (e.g. in the case of a marriage).
- Tuvalu does not have secure storage of registration records as it has been unaffordable.
- Stillbirths should be registered by either the parents or by a qualified informant such as a medical practitioner or other person attending the birth, but in practice few are registered.
- Foreigners born in Tuvalu can register and receive a certificate, but do not automatically become citizens of Tuvalu.
## Proposed Tuvalu Country Strategies for Enhancing Birth Registration

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness raising</td>
<td>1. Government Officials: To organise orientation sessions and workshops – one in each island</td>
<td>Local Government Council Local Registrar Teachers Health officials</td>
<td>Develop plan for orientation sessions (national and local levels) Approval from Attorney-General Prepare agenda, documents, speakers, logistics, etc. Follow-up plans</td>
<td>Immediate (June to December 2005)</td>
<td>Budget from Attorney-General’s Office Other government agencies Donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Community-Level: To organise local level trainings (following government officials training)</td>
<td>Parents Children/Youth Women Elders Church</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
<td>(same as above + community contribution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration between Govt. Dept./Agencies</td>
<td>Establish Task Force on Birth Registration</td>
<td>Representatives from Health, Home Affairs, Attorney-General, Education, Immigration and others</td>
<td>Attorney-General’s office to convene this taskforce and recommend representatives from various Ministries Ensure regular meetings</td>
<td>Immediate (June to August 2005)</td>
<td>Attorney-General’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective: to facilitate coordination &amp; effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data/Information system management</td>
<td>Computerization (hardware and software)</td>
<td>Attorney-General’s Office Registrars from Local Gov. Councils Overseas technical assistance</td>
<td>Develop proposal for data/info system and computerization Develop a software system including archiving Training in use and management of software (ICT)</td>
<td>Short-term (in one year)</td>
<td>Attorney-General’s Office Other government departments Donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective: to computerize system &amp; establish archiving system</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>draft new sections/provisions (including overseas-born)</td>
<td>Taskforce Attorney-General’s office</td>
<td>Taskforce to develop plan Attorney-General’s office to implement</td>
<td>Short-term (one year)</td>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective: to review and update laws</td>
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BIRTH REGISTRATION IN VANUATU
Presented by Mrs Flora Kalsaria, Sector Analyst

1. Birth registration in Vanuatu

The main Civil Status Office of Vanuatu is located in Port Vila and mandated by an Act of Parliament, Cap 61, and the Marriages Act, Cap 60. There are six provincial sub-registration offices including the two municipalities carrying out the task of registration in Vanuatu. There are also 69 area sub-registrars in rural areas who assist the provincial registrars in carrying out registration. In addition, pastors in most denominations perform marriages and issue registrations of marriage to couples.

The area sub-registrars fill in the registration forms and issue a certified copy of the registration (blue) to the client, and send the original copy (white) to the head office in Port Vila where it is entered in the inward mail registry. Proof of a birth is required before a registration is made. This is usually a birth notification from a health centre.

A thorough check is done before an ID is issued, then it is filed in books in order of year of birth, island and province and stored in a Chubb filing cabinet. Any double registrations found during the process of checking are cancelled and filed. Double registrations often occur in relation to people from rural Vanuatu.

Birth registration is required under the Act (Cap 61 of 1971). It should take place within 21 days of birth and registration is free, but there is a charge for extracts and copies. Late registrations are permitted. In practice a fee of 200-500 vatu is charged for registration, and similar fees for extracts and copies.

The Civil Status Office is not fully computerised. All registrations are stored in paper form and it is very time consuming to search them and difficult to protect them from damage. In the period 2000-2004 a few computers were replaced and a new photocopier was purchased in 2002. Two new air conditioners were purchased for the computer room and to maintain a cool environment for stored records.

2. Community view of registration

Generally the community does not take birth registration seriously. There is low coverage and registrations of children are often delayed until school age or later. Overall it is estimated that 25 per cent of births are registered, with 20 per cent made within a year of birth. In 2003 the total number of registrations made was 4,428, including newborns and late registrations. This is less than the expected 6,000 births in any given year.

The Civil Status Office is doing its best to improve working relations with Provincial authorities, the Immigration Department, the National Statistics Office, the Finance Department, the Health Department, the Education Department, the Electoral Office, statutory bodies such as the Vanuatu National Provident Fund (VNPF) and with chiefs and communities. These groups support civil registration in the following ways:
**Immigration**: The Immigration Department supports the program of registration by ensuring that every citizen of Vanuatu who applies for a passport must register with the Civil Status Office before their application can be processed.

**Health**: Every newborn baby in the hospital is given a doctors certificate before the child is released from the maternity ward. The mother then presents the doctors certificate at the Civil Status Office for the formal registration of the child.

**Education**: Pupils who did the Year 7 examination are required to register with the Civil Status Department or its agencies.

**Public Service Commission**: All employees of the Public Service are required to present a copy of the birth registration of their children with their applications for child maintenance.

**Vanuatu National Provident Fund**: VNPF policy ensures that every employee in the workforce is registered. The Civil Status Office ensures that the information on the date of birth in the VNPF database matches the information in the official records.

3. **Obstacles preventing complete registration**

**Insufficient and inadequately trained human resources**. The Civil Status Office Organogram allows for eight employees, but there are currently only three permanent officers and two casual. Training is required for provincial sub-registrars, but because the budget is insufficient, only staff in the main office have access to the vocational courses offered by the Government Human Resources Development Centre. The spread of the islands in Vanuatu makes it costly to organize registration workshops to train sub-registrars in registration programmes/activities. No workshop has been organised in the last 10 years.

**Insufficient infrastructure and lack of computerisation**. An attempt was made to computerise registration records in 2001 and 2002 with assistance from an Australian Business Volunteer, and by May 2002 45,000 records had been entered into a database. Towards the end of June 2002 the network server crashed and 80 per cent of the entries were lost. The review of the database will recommence in June 2005 and hopefully by mid 2007 all 180,000 records should be entered into the database.

**Decentralisation** of the civil registration activities to the provinces is difficult because of high costs. Telecommunications especially are very costly.

**Lack of implementation of the Civil Registration Institutional Strengthening Project.**

This project proposal has twice been submitted to the Council of Ministers for the Vanuatu Government and twice approved but has not attracted donor funding. The proposal is being reviewed and will be re-submitted again to the Council of Ministers for reconsideration.
## PROPOSED VANUATU COUNTRY STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING BIRTH REGISTRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES/OBJECTIVES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Update Legislation</strong></td>
<td>Review and revise legislation</td>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>Registrar-General requests Director General of Int. Aff. to request legislation review</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>TA (possibly UNICEF or other donor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthen BR institutional structure</strong></td>
<td>Increase staff, upgrade skills and equipment, more interdepartmental collaboration</td>
<td>Senior Govt. Officials</td>
<td>NCC through Ministry of Child Rights and Civil Status recommends reestablishing Working Group to revise project proposal. Foreign Affairs to participate in Working Group to ensure effective lobbying for donor support</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>May seek donor support to assist with institutional strengthening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locate births for registration</strong></td>
<td>Share information between Health and Civil Status Office</td>
<td>Health workers and registrars</td>
<td>NCC to recommend that Health and Civil Status explore strategies and mechanisms for sharing data</td>
<td>Soon</td>
<td>May need donor support for software upgrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness raising</strong></td>
<td>Raise community and official awareness of value of birth registration</td>
<td>Officials, community, schools, parents</td>
<td>NCC and Working Group develop appropriate awareness-raising strategies for each target groups</td>
<td>Soon</td>
<td>Support for IEC material development, NGOs, Schools,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computerize Civil Status Office</strong></td>
<td>Install efficient, backed up, computerized system and enter all registrations to improve efficiency and storage</td>
<td>Civil Status Office</td>
<td>CS Office to prepare separate funding proposal for computerization, software and training</td>
<td>Soon</td>
<td>Donor support for hardware, software and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr Sitiveni Navana Nabuka from the Fiji Government’s ITC Services Section demonstrated an Oracle-based software package he has developed to manage birth registration in Fiji. Distinctive features of this software package are that it links health recording and birth registration, and supports direct checking of the database by authorised government officers. Health officials enter details of an expected birth when a mother first presents for ante-natal care. These data form the basis of the registration, which is completed by the Registrar General’s Office after the birth occurs. Registry staff complete the registration by adding the required details, including the exact date of birth and the child’s name.

This system facilitates the identification and tracing of any children who have not been registered within the prescribed time, and has made a substantial contribution to the efficiency and utility of Fiji’s birth registration system. It also improves documentation of stillbirths and neonatal deaths. Enabling authorised officials to access the system on line to check registration details for purposes such as issuing passports saves time and is convenient for the community. The software has a number of features to protect data and ensure confidentiality, including customised menus for each type of user to limit access to the particular parts of the system that concern them.

**Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) Menu**

Hospital, Registrar General, Bureau of Statistics all have access to system.
Chapter Two: Birth Registration Software in Fiji

Mother Folder Details: Used to capture the details of the child before birth by the Hospital.

Birth Notification: Completion of birth notification by the Hospital or Registrar’s Office.
Birth Registration: to give identity to baby. Done by the Registrars Office.

Birth Registration Completed: Done by the Registrars Office.
## Sample of Birth Certificate

![Birth Certificate Sample](image)

**BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Number</th>
<th>1346626**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Register General</td>
<td>Dist. Reg.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Birth**  
MY BEAUTIFUL BABY*

**Registered by**  
SNABUKA

**CHILD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Name</th>
<th>1. MY BEAUTIFUL BABY*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Sex</td>
<td>2. MALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Date of Birth</td>
<td>3. 13-NOV-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Place of Birth</td>
<td>4. MOSRISON</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARENTS**

| (5) Date Married | 5. ********** |
| (6) Place        | 6. ********** |
| (7) Previous issues |  
| (a) Living      | 7a. MALE:0 FEMALE:0 |
| (b) Dead        | 7b. MALE:0 FEMALE:0 |

**FATHER**

| (8) Name and father's name | 8. ********** |
| (9) Occupation | 9. ********** |
| (10) Date of Birth | 10. ********** |
| (11) Place | 11. ********** |
| (12) If Fijian, (a) Village (b) Matuqali (c) Tokaoka (d) Yavusa (e) Tikina (f) Province |  
| (a) Living      | 12a. ********** |
| (b) Dead        | 12b. ********** |
| (c) Living      | 12c. ********** |
| (d) Dead        | 12d. ********** |
| (e) Living      | 12e. ********** |
| (f) Dead        | 12f. ********** |

**MOTHER**

| (14) Name, maiden surname and father's name | 14. SALOME TUBUNA |
| (15) Occupation | 15. DOMESTIC DUTIES |
| (16) Date of Birth | 16. 06-JAN-1983 |
| (17) Place of Birth | 17. MAU VILLAGE, VEVATULOA, NAMOSI |
| (18) If Fijian, (a) Village (b) Matuqali (c) Tokaoka (d) Yavusa (e) Tikina (f) Province |  
| (a) Living      | 18a. ********** |
| (b) Dead        | 18b. ********** |
| (c) Living      | 18c. ********** |
| (d) Dead        | 18d. ********** |
| (e) Living      | 18e. ********** |
| (f) Dead        | 18f. ********** |

**OTHER ISSUES**

| (19) Other issues |  
| (a) Living      | 19a. MALE:0 FEMALE:0 |
| (b) Dead        | 19b. MALE:0 FEMALE:0 |

**INFORMANT**

| (20) Name and Relationship to child (if any) | 20. SITIVENI NABUKA RELATIONSHIP - GRANDFATHER |
| (21) Occupation | 21. FARMER |
| (22) Home Address | 22. THIS IS A TEST BY ITC |

**REGISTRATION**

| (23) Date of Registration | 23. 14-NOV-2005 |
| (24) Place of Registration | 24. SUVA |
| (25) Amendment | 25. *** |

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of an entry in the Registrars of Births kept at the Registrar-General's Office, Suva, Fiji and extracted this 14th day of NOVEMBER, 2005...

*NB: Any alterations automatically invalidates this certificate*

**Printed By:** OPS SBIDM

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### Chapter Two: Birth Registration Software in Fiji
Birth Registration as the Child’s First Right

- As a right in itself: name, identity, nationality
- As a pre-requisite to fulfilling other rights:
  - Protection from early marriage, trafficking, child labour
  - Identification following war or displacement
  - Early recruitment in the armed forces
  - Ensuring that immunization, school enrolment, sanitation reaches all children
  - Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS
- As an essential foundation to guarantee the identity, choices, access to services and protection from abuse and exploitation for all children

A World Fit for Children
Adopted by Governments during the UN Special Session on Children (May 2002)

“Develop systems to ensure the registration of every child at or shortly after birth, and fulfil his or her right to acquire a name and a nationality, in accordance with national laws and relevant international instruments”

Some Hard Facts

- 41% of births not registered worldwide
- 50 million new born not registered + millions not registered in the past
- 70% births not registered in Sub-Saharan Africa (17 million)
- South Asia: 40% of world’s unregistered (22.5 million)
- East Asia and Pacific: 22% births not registered (7 million)

UNICEF’s Strategic Plan

  “…to promote more effective birth registration systems, with particular focus on the registration of children in highly disadvantaged groups and families or in geographical areas with the worst social indicators.”

- 2006–2009: Birth registration as a target under Child Protection
  “…free and compulsory registration on births with focus on excluded groups and communities…strengthening of birth registration systems and advocating for free and compulsory birth registration”
UNICEF’s Strategy
- Including birth registration in the country programme of cooperation with Governments
- Involving partners (donors, NGOs, religious and academic institutions, etc.)
- Research – to understand the situation and monitor trends
- Advocacy with Governments, Donors, International Agencies
- Exchange of experiences: Uganda-Bangladesh
- Facilitating/supporting technical exchange across countries
- Training and Capacity building – government agencies, community level, NGOs, young people

Key Partnerships
- The UN system: UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Statistical Division
- Plan International & NGO Committee on UNICEF: The Unregistered Children’s Project (Asia)
- UNICEF and PLAN: collaboration in Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa

What are the issues?
- “Political will”:
  - Law reform, decentralisation, resources, citizenship issues
- Little perceived value for registration
  - Awareness, creating demand, language and cultural/indigenous differences
- Weak systems
  - Infrastructure, integration with other services: health, school
- Involving the community
  - youth, elders, church, school

Implications for an Un-Registered Child
- Limited choices and rights to:
  - Access to education
  - Access to health services
  - Eligibility for welfare benefits
  - Legal employment
  - Safe travel/migration
  - Legal protection
- Governments unable to fulfil obligations:
  - Lack of data/info – so, plans and budgets for social services do not target unregistered children
  - Monitoring for emergency preparedness
  - Assessing impact of social services

Key Consequences for Children
- Weakens families as the first line of protection for children
· Continues cycles of poverty, abuse and exploitation
· Undermines the inherent right to human dignity of children
· In other words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNREGISTERED CHILDREN</th>
<th>= NO IDENTITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= INCREASED VULNERABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= “INVISIBLE” IN SOCIETY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Way Forward – Eight Recommendations
· Legislation for compulsory registration of births
· Free birth registration
· Time limits and penalties
· Integration with service delivery systems (health, education)
· De-centralization
· Awareness-raising, advocacy and communications
· Community (children/youth) participation
· Partnerships for birth registration

Some Examples of Innovative Strategies
· INDONESIA : New Civil Registration Law – followed by Presidential Decree in 2002
· VIETNAM : 2001 “Year of Birth Registration”
· THAILAND : Mobile Birth Registration
· BANGLADESH : De-centralization & integration with health system
· UGANDA : Integration with local government
· ARMENIA : Community level awareness raising and advocacy
Some basic facts about Cambodia:

Government Structure:
- Ministry of the Interior
- 24 Provinces/Municipalities
- 185 Districts/Khans
- 1621 Communes/Sangkat
- Population 12.8 million

Goal of the project: Build a sustainable civil registration system
- Mobile Registration Campaign focuses on birth registration

Objectives
- Establish and strengthen the civil registration system in the country
- Hands-on training for government officials on civil registration
- Clearing the backlog of more than 95% un-registered population
- Advocacy and public information about importance of civil registration

Government’s ownership at planning and implementation levels is the fundamental principle of the project

Principles:
- Leadership and ownership of the Cambodian Government
- Participation of Cambodian Officials in planning and implementation
- Outside support to build local capacities and plug the gaps
Plan International Cambodia provides technical support to the MOI for planning and implementation of the project

**Project Partners**

- Support MOI in decision-making through policy inputs
- 27 United Nations Volunteers for 7 months
- Project Office for field coordination and support
- Public information campaign
- Logistical support
- Monitoring support

**Pilot Project**

A need-driven initiative must unearth real issues and devise a mechanism to address them. Issues Identified:

- Commune Council, responsible for civil registration, lacked capacity
- General indifference towards civil registration
- Unclear roles at different levels—policy making and implementation
- Lack of awareness among population
- Ineffective logistics and material support system
Civil Registration: The Alignment

Despite numerous issues, the pilot project achieved remarkable success leading to launching of nation-wide campaign by the Government

- Pilot study in six communes; two achieved 100%
- Role of centre, province, district and commune identified
- Public information strategy evaluated
- Contours of the National Policy identified

Measures taken by the Government of Cambodia show great political will to achieve the objectives of the project

- Prime Minister approved the launch of mobile civil registration as a priority of the Government of Cambodia
- National Committee for mobile registration formed—Secretary of State MOI as its President
- 24 Provincial Committees formed to support districts and communes
- National Plan of Action was framed for nation-wide registration

Measures taken by the Government of Cambodia show great commitment to achieving the objective of civil registration

- Law relating to registration of newborn babies amended
- Fee on birth registration waived until 31st Aug 2005
- Over 13,000 officials were trained to carry out mobile registration
- Large number of registration books printed & delivered to provinces
Over 13,000 Officials were trained for nation-wide registration

Plan's Project Implementation

- Every region has 8 provinces
- RCs coordinate with provincial Office of General Affairs
- Monitoring is done by MOI, province and districts
A three-step local planning process based on the scale-management technique was adopted

- Step 1: Planning at Provincial level including District Governors
- Step 2: Planning at District level involving Commune Chiefs
- Step 3: Planning by the Commune Councils as per guidelines and training

Public Education was provided everywhere, even in pagodas

**Sensitization, Education and Sustainability Activities**

- Drawing on the street
- Drawing on paper and Quiz
- Races and Tug of War
- Entertainment
- Carousel free for the whole day

Nation-wide Mobile Registration started on 1st October 2004

Within 7 months of nation-wide operation 38% of Cambodians received their birth certificates

- Registration 2002-2003: 161,261 (1.6%) *(Available Statistics)*

### Civil Registration Status

**April 2005**

- Population registered: 62%
- Population not registered: 38%
Registration 2002-2003: 161,261 (1.6%) *(Available Statistics)*
Registration October 04 to April 2005: 4.9 Million (38%)
Females registered = 51%

Birth registration…they legally exist!

**Mobile registration is not without issues: the scale itself is a huge challenge**
- Logistic and material support
- Selection and training of over 13,000 registration officials
- Awareness about the importance of birth registration
- Reporting
- Remoteness/communication problems
- Illiteracy
- Mindset and attitude

**The Path Forward**
“We haven’t done 100%; today a child is born in my village and he is not yet registered” – *Response of the Monorom Commune Chief when congratulated on achieving 100% birth registration*

**Government needs technical support to manage the data and work out a mechanism for continuous updating**
- Continuous technical and logistics assistance for mobile registration
- Effective advocacy and public information campaign
- Support in computerization of registration data
- Suggest necessary amendments in law protecting children’s rights
ANNEXES

A. Programme and Agenda
B. Workshop Participants
C. Opening Remarks
D. Powerpoint Presentations
E. Press Coverage Clippings
F. Closing Remarks
A. PROGRAMME & AGENDA

Regional Workshop on Enhancing Birth Registration in the Pacific
Jovili Meo Mission Centre, Pacific Theological College (PTC)
Outline of the Programme
25-27 May, 2005

Expected Outcomes from the Workshop were:
1. Enhanced understanding of the importance of birth registration including child rights, access to public services and national planning.
2. Shared and reviewed information on the current systems and practices of birth registration in the Pacific.
3. Recommended birth registration country strategies.

Objectives:
1. To develop a better understanding of the status of birth registration in Pacific Island Countries.
2. Development of country strategies to improve birth registration systems and practices in their respective countries.

Participants Profile:
- Governments from:
  - Fiji: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Bureau of Statistics, Information and Technology and Computing services (ITC Services)
  - Kiribati: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Social Development, National Statistics Office
  - Samoa: Ministry of Finance
  - Solomon Islands: Department of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health and Medical Services
  - Tonga: Supreme Court
  - Tuvalu: Office of the Attorney General
  - Vanuatu: Civil Status, Department of Economic and Sector Planning
  - Timor-Leste: Ministry of Justice
- Regional Organization: Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC)
- NGO: PLAN International Cambodia
- Donor: Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA)
- UN system: UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF (Headquarters, Timor-Leste, Pacific)

Facilitator: Dr Miliakere Kaitani (Demographer, Consultant)

Workshop Technical Advisor: Dr Chris McMurray (Demographer, Consultant)
# Day One (Wednesday, 25 May 2005)

**OPENING: 8:30 – 10:30am**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration of participants</th>
<th>8:30 - 10:30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devotion</td>
<td>Pacific Theological College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Programme Coordinator, UNICEF Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Remarks</td>
<td>Dr Juliet Fleishl, Technical Officer in Human Resources and Health Systems, WHO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Birth</td>
<td>Mr Najib M. Assifi, Representative, UNFPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Ms Gillian Mellsop, Representative, UNICEF Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Photo</td>
<td>Dr Chris McMurray, Workshop Technical Advisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Morning Tea**

| 10:00 – 10:30am |

**SESSION 1: Objectives of the Workshop 11:00 – 11:30am**

**Objective of session:**
- Overview of Conference aims and objectives
- Participant introductions
- Expectations, questions and comments
- House keeping issues

**Process / Activity:** Presentations, questions & comments and introductions

**Presenter:** Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Mr Daniel Dravet

**SESSION 2: Case Study Presentation on Birth Registration 1:30 – 4:30pm**

**Objective of session:**
- Sharing of Pacific case studies in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati on birth registration systems and practices

**Process / Activity:** Individual Country Presentations (10 mins each)

**Presenters:** Country Representatives

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Lunch**

| 12:30 – 1:30pm |

**SESSION 3: Presentation on each Country’s Systems and Practices on Birth Registration 1:30 – 4:30pm**

**Objective of session:**
- Sharing current birth registration systems and practices in each represented country
  1. Brief description on the birth registration process in your country
  2. How birth registration is regarded by the community (including estimation of coverage)
  3. Main obstacles you see as preventing complete coverage

**Process / Activity:** Individual Country Presentations (10 mins each)

**Presenters:** Country Representatives

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Mr Daniel Dravet, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Afternoon Tea**

| (to be served during Session 3 from 3:00 – 3:30pm) |

**Reception hosted by UNICEF Pacific Representative, Ms Gillian Mellsop**

| 6.00 – 8.00pm |
## Day Two (Thursday 26 May 2005)

### SESSION 4: Groupwork on identifying issues and problems of cases in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati

**Objective of session:** Participants to identify birth registration issues and problems with using these three countries' cases (dividing participants into three groups)

**Process / Activity:** Presentations, questions & comments and introductions

**Presenters:** All Groups

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Dr Miliakere Kaitani, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Resources/Materials**
- Flipcharts
- VIPP Cards
- Marker Pens

### SESSION 5: Presentations on Group Work

**Objective of session:** Reporting and discussion on group birth registration issues and problems

**Process / Activity:** Presentation followed by discussion (10 mins each)

**Presenters:** All Groups

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Dr Miliakere Kaitani, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Resources/Materials**
- Multimedia
- Screen

### SESSION 6: Global Perspective of Birth Registration

**Objective of session:** Sharing the global perspective of birth registration

**Process / Activity:** Presentation followed by discussion

**Presenters:** Dr Victor Karunan, UNICEF HQ

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Mr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Resources/Materials**
- Multimedia
- Screen

### SESSION 7: Birth Registration Country Needs and Priorities

**Objective of session:** Participants to identify birth registration priorities

**Process / Activity:** Group work by respective countries and prepare presentations

**Presenters:** All groups

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Dr Miliakere Kaitani, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux, Dr Victor Karunan, Mr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Ms Katherine Gilbert, Fiji and Timor-Leste participants

**Resources/Materials**
- Flipcharts
- VIPP Cards
- Marker Pens

### SESSION 8: Plenary Session on Group Work

**Objective of session:** Reporting on group birth registration needs and priorities

**Process / Activity:** Presentation followed by discussion (10 mins each)

**Presenters:** All Groups

**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani

**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Mr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Resources/Materials**
- Multimedia
- Screen
### Day Three (Friday, 27 May 2005)

**Report on day two**  
8:00 – 8:30am

**SESSION 9: Developing Country Strategies**  
8:30 – 10:30am

**Objective of session:**  
Developing birth registration Country Strategies

**Process / Activity:**  
Group work using a Country Strategic Plans template  

**Presenters:** All Groups  
**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani  
**Resource persons:** Dr Chris McMurray, Dr Miliakere Kaitani, Dr Victor Karunan, Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux, Mr Daniel Dravet

**Resources/Materials:**  
- Flipcharts
- VIPP Cards
- Marker Pens

**SESSION 10: Presentations on Proposed Country Strategies**  
9:45 – 10:30pm

**Objective of session:**  
Reporting on group country strategic plans

**Process / Activity:**  
Presentations followed by discussion  

**Presenters:** Group Reporter  
**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani  
**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Resources/Materials:**  
- Multimedia
- Screen

**Morning Tea**  
10:30 – 11:00am

**SESSION 11: Reporting on Recommendations for Birth Registration Country Strategic Plans**  
11:00 – 12:00pm

**Objective of session:**  
Participants to review recommendations for country birth registration strategic plans

**Process / Activity:**  
Plenary for final comments and feedback  

**Presenters:** Group Reporter  
**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani  
**Resource person:** Dr Chris McMurray, Dr Victor Karunan, Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint, Ms Reiko Okumura-Rougeaux

**Resources/Materials:**  
- Multimedia
- Screen

**SESSION 12: Conclusion and Recommendations (Next Steps)**  
12:00 – 12:30pm

**Objective of session:**  
Where to from here?

**Process / Activity:**  
Plenary session  

**Presenters:** Dr Chris McMurray  
**Facilitator:** Dr Miliakere Kaitani  
**Resource person:** Dr Victor Karunan, Dr Thaneoke Kyaw-Myint

**Resources/Materials:**  
- Multimedia
- Screen

**CLOSING:**  
12:30 – 12:40pm

**Closing Address**  
Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Senior deputy General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community
## B. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION &amp; ORGANISATION</th>
<th>CONTACT DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mrs Laite Matadigo | Registrar General  
C/- Births, Deaths and Marriages  
Ministry of Justice | P O Box 2226, Government Buildings, Suva, FIJI  
Tel: +679 3315280 Fax: +679 3304917  
E-mail: lmatadigo@govnet.gov.fj |
| Mrs Litiana Raikuna | Health Information Unit  
Ministry of Health | P O Box 2223, Government Buildings, Suva, FIJI  
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E-mail: lraikuna@health.gov.fj |
| Mr Sitiveni Navana Nabuka | System Analyst  
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E-mail: snabuka@itc.gov.fj |
| Ms Merewalesi Raikoti | Assistant Statistician  
Bureau of Statistics | P O Box 2221, Government Building, Suva, FIJI  
Tel: +679 3315822 Fax: +679 3303656  
E-mail: info@statsfiji.gov.fj |
| Ms Tiensi Teea | Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages  
Civil Registration Office  
Ministry of Internal Affairs & Social Development | P O Box 55, Bairiki, Tarawa, KIRIBATI  
Tel: +686 90546/22090 Fax: +686 21232  
E-mail: cro@skl.net.ki |
| Ms Jenny Keaki-Tonganibeia | Senior Statistician  
National Statistics Office | Bairiki, Tarawa, KIRIBATI  
Tel: +686 21815 Fax: +686 21307  
E-mail: jenny2lk@yahoo.com |
| Mr Patisela Levaopolo Eteuati | Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages  
Ministry of Finance | Private Mail Bag, Apia, SAMOA  
Tel: +685 7792144 Fax: +685 32156  
E-mail: levaopolo.eteuati@mof.ws |
| Mr Martin Karani | Registrar Electoral and Civil Registration Office  
Department of Home Affairs | P O Box G11, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS  
Tel: +677 21198 Fax: +677 26161  
E-mail: mskarani@yahoo.com |
| Ms Ruth Liloqula | Permanent Secretary  
Department of Home Affairs | P O Box G11, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS  
Tel: +677 28601 Fax: +677 24837  
E-mail: psha@pmc.gov.sb |
| Mr Abraham Namokari | Director Health Planning & Statistics Division  
Planning & Statistics Division  
Ministry of Health & Medical Services | P O Box 349, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS  
Tel: +677 25443 Fax: +677 20085  
E-mail: abanamo@hotmail.com |
| Mrs Temaleti Manakovi Aleamotu’a Pahulu | Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court  
Supreme Court | P O Box 11, Nuku’alofa, TONGA  
Tel: +676 23599/22380 Fax: +676 22380  
E-mail: tmupahulu@kalianet.to |
| Ms Fatili Ionatana Simii | Assistant Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages  
Office of the Attorney General | Vaiaku, Funafuti, TUVALU  
Tel: +688 20123 Fax: +688 20817  
E-mail: agoffice@tuvalu.tv, sionatana@tuvalu.tv |
| Ms Saini Malalau Seuka | Crown Counsel  
Office of the Attorney General | Vaiaku, Funafuti, TUVALU  
Tel: +688 20123 Fax: +688 20817  
E-mail: agoffice@tuvalu.tv, malalau@yahoo.com |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION &amp; ORGANISATION</th>
<th>CONTACT DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Domingas Gutierres da Silva Oliveira</td>
<td>Chief of District Repatriation Unit for Dili District Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>Dili, TIMOR-LESTE Tel: +670 7240442 Fax: E-mail:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Mario Ximenes</td>
<td>Head of Civil Registry and Nationality Ministry of Justice Directorate National and Public Notary</td>
<td>Dili, TIMOR-LESTE Tel: +670 7272684 Fax: E-mail: <a href="mailto:edb@gov.tl.org">edb@gov.tl.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Dulce de Jesus Soares</td>
<td>Assistant Project Officer United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)</td>
<td>UN House, Apartados 212, Rua de Caicoli, Dili, TIMOR-LESTE Tel: +670 3 313 309 or +670 724 8592 Fax: +670 3 313 322 E-mail: <a href="mailto:doares@unicef.org">doares@unicef.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Flora Kalsaria</td>
<td>Sector Analyst Department of Economic and Sector Planning</td>
<td>Port Vila, VANUATU Tel: +678 22605 Fax: +678 23087 E-mail: <a href="mailto:fkalssia@vanuatu.gov.vu">fkalssia@vanuatu.gov.vu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Juliet Fleischl</td>
<td>Technical Officer in Human Resources and Health Systems World Health Organization (WHO)</td>
<td>Level 4, Provident Plaza One, Downtown Boulevard, Ellery Street, Suva, FIJI Tel: +679 3304600/3304631 Fax: +679 330462/3311530 E-mail: <a href="mailto:fleischlj@sp.wpro.who.int">fleischlj@sp.wpro.who.int</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Lorna Rolls</td>
<td>Programme Analyst United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</td>
<td>Private Mail Bag, Suva, FIJI Tel: +679 3308022 Fax: +679 3312785 E-mail: <a href="mailto:lrolls@unfpa.org">lrolls@unfpa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Suzuki Hisashi</td>
<td>Assistant Resident Representative Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA)</td>
<td>Fiji Office, 7th Floor, Dominion House, JICA Private Mail Bag, Suva, FIJI Tel: +679 3302522 Fax: +679 3302452 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Suzuki.Hisashi@jica.go.jp">Suzuki.Hisashi@jica.go.jp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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C. OPENING REMARKS

Dr Juliet Fleishl
Technical Officer in Human Resources and Health Systems
World Health Organisation (WHO)

Workshop participants from Pacific Island Countries
Colleagues from the UN system and Regional Organisations
Workshop Facilitators and Honourable Guests

It gives me great pleasure to be here today to deliver the opening remarks on behalf of the World Health Organisation and to once again join hands with UNICEF at this regional workshop aimed at enhancing birth registration systems and practices in the Pacific.

On behalf of the WHO Country Representative Dr Ken Chen, I would like to sincerely congratulate UNICEF on this timely initiative and to once again reiterate WHO’s support for this workshop.

It is also important to commend the assistance of the Government of Fiji in hosting this regional workshop and to mention at the outset the contribution of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This workshop once again clearly demonstrates our commitment to work hand-in-hand with countries in pursuing common goals, particularly those relating to the well-being and care of the children of the Pacific.

Birth registration is a very important issue and it is a fundamental right of every child, as stated in article 7 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

It is known that every year some 50 million children born are not registered. A child who is not registered is given no nationality and no official existence, which in turn makes them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. At the individual level, birth registration provides civil rights and protection and access to services.

Without a birth certificate we can be denied basic rights and entitlements such as rights to healthcare, education, participation and use of services, which are the basic entitlements of any citizen in society.

The importance of birth registration also goes beyond the individual and provides essential information for economic and social planning. Unregistered citizens are invisible for policy and planning purposes and when we are dealing with figures such as 50 million unregistered children worldwide, it is cause for concern. Lack of registration can exacerbate poverty and increase the extent of marginalisation.

Birth registration coverage in many countries of the Pacific tends to be much higher in urban areas than in the rural parts of the countries. In smaller countries, the registration of birth is nearly complete for all individuals. In the larger and more diverse countries, both birth registration and death registration are generally incomplete and therefore insufficient to provide a realistic picture of fertility and mortality.
Although the office specifically responsible for civil registration has oversight of birth registration, health authorities in virtually every country record information about births and issue documents to the caregiver.

As we know, the health systems in the Pacific Island Countries are constantly being improved and extended, and it is possible that within a few years virtually every newborn infant will come into contact with the health system. It is therefore a timely opportunity for key people from Civil Registration and Health to come together to discuss strategies to accelerate the attainment of comprehensive birth registration so they can become part of these improvement of health systems and contribute to overall improvements in service delivery in the region.

We hope that through this workshop on enhancing birth registration in the Pacific, you will gain valuable insight and information and develop realistic plans to put into practice in your respective countries.

Finally, on behalf of Dr Chen, I wish you the very best for this workshop and trust that at the end of the meeting, we will all take away valuable information pertaining to the important task of enhancing birth registration in the Pacific.

Mr Najib M. Assifi  
Representative  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Distinguished Delegates  
Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to provide the introductory remarks at this important forum.

This morning marks the beginning of a journey to accomplish great things for the people of the Pacific. In the spirit of partnership and collaboration between the UN family, regional development partners and you as ambassadors from the Pacific Island countries, we will embark on a 3 day journey to develop a better understanding on the status of birth registration in the Pacific and to explore what national actions can be inspired to support national birth registration in the Pacific. Before we indulge further I would like to share with you overarching international treaties that obligate us to fulfil commitments to improve the lives, the wellbeing and the rights of every Pacific Island child, man and woman.

At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, universal goals such as education for all, the empowerment of women, reduction in maternal mortality, prevention of HIV/AIDS and an enhanced partnership for the alleviation of poverty were enshrined in the ICPD Programme of Action which was adopted by 179 countries in Cairo, Egypt.
The principles of the Programme of Action are firmly grounded on universal human rights. The ICPD Programme of Action advocates reproductive rights such as the right to life and survival, the right to liberty and security of the person, the right to marry and found a family and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

One of the most fundamental human rights is the assumption that each person matters and every one deserves to be treated with dignity. Specific to health, is that “Everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health” and universal access to health care services.

Article 7 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) says, “The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.”

Despite the commitment of governments to human rights, sealed at the internal fora, the reality in many developing countries is that many children born are never registered and their health and welfare throughout their lives remain anonymous. Without a birth certificate, children may be denied basic human rights such as education, health care, and protection. Furthermore, birth registration clearly identifies the parents of the child and legally obligates the parents and the state to provide care and protection for the child and contribute to his or her welfare and personal development. The absence of birth registration exposes the individual or the child to vulnerable situations, involving discrimination, abuse and neglect.

Birth registration assures the individual’s right to access the basic entitlements of every citizen including the Right to basic health and education services. Without registration, the individual is exposed to the risks of deportation and being misplaced in adult life, particularly in situations of civil war and migration. At the national level, birth registration is crucial for national planning and resource mobilization purposes. National planners and statisticians need accurate birth figures to estimate fertility and mortality trends.

In spite of the above, according to a UNICEF Report, in 2000, an estimated 50 million babies or at least 41% of births worldwide were not registered. Similarly, according to a report by WHO, of the 192 states reached by their programme, only 52 states, most of which were developed states, had vital registration systems that record births and deaths for at least 90% of their population.

Some of the challenges of the birth registration in developing countries include lack of political will to put in place resources to facilitate birth registration, lack of registration facilities outside the larger towns, poor access to birth registration centres, particularly for those in the rural and outer islands, and the stigmatisation of unmarried mothers.

While UNFPA was providing support for the strengthening of civil and vital registration systems in the 70s and 80s, currently UNFPA actively advocates for the establishment of vital registration systems. UNFPA’s experience has been that commitments of policy makers and investments in vital registration are required before such systems reach a stage where the completeness and accuracy of the information would allow accurate demographic measurement.
Let us be reminded of the commitments endorsed in international treaties to protect and ensure the rights of every individual including the right to have a personal identity from birth the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents. Let us build on the Pacific spirit of partnership and collaboration to integrate a rights-based approach in health care services and information systems. Let us ensure that we achieve the mission of this important three day journey.

Ms. Gillian Mellsop  
Representative  
UNICEF Pacific

A child who is not registered at birth is in danger of being shut out of society – denied the right to an official identity, a recognised name and a nationality.

Registration of birth is a country’s first official recognition of a child. The right to a name and nationality is one of the most fundamental human rights. Unregistered children can face discrimination, be subject to child labour, trafficking, conscription and are challenged with the lack of access to basic services such as health and education.

Good morning participants, facilitators, ladies and gentlemen: thank you for this opportunity to deliver a short keynote address.

Why is it important for all children to have their births registered? The answer, of course, is that the children of the relatively privileged, such as all of us in this room, seldom have their basic rights denied or discriminated against. But it is the children of the poor, girls, and other similarly marginal groups in most societies who suffer excessively in this.

Under-privileged children who are not registered at birth and who do not have a certificate to prove it are denied access to basic services such as education and health care even where facilities exist.

They are denied the protection that existing laws may offer to children. This could be protection:

- Against being exploited as child labourers;
- Against trafficking;
- Against sexual exploitation;
- Against early marriage; or
- From conscription into armed groups.

Since they cannot legally prove their existence or their age, their poverty and vulnerability is exploited and made worse.
For every child to reach his or her full potential in societies that respect people’s rights and dignity, obtaining an identity and nationality through birth registration is necessary. All other rights depend on that one right, stated in Article 7 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child: to be registered immediately after birth and thereby obtain an identity before the law of the country.

Though a child may have a name, if not recognised and given a national identity or citizenship by the state, he or she is stateless or “non-existent,” and therefore denied social, economic, political and protection rights. This is reaffirmed in the first provision of the “World Fit for Children” outcome document from the United Nations General Assembly at its 27th Special Session on Children in May 2002. The document states: “to develop systems to ensure the registration of every child at or shortly after birth, and fulfil his or her right to acquire a name and a nationality, in accordance with national laws and relevant international instruments.”

Ladies and gentlemen: we are all here today because we have been educated and we are able to travel. We can travel because we have passports. We have bank accounts. Most of us have children who in turn are registered and are entitled to all these privileges. Our children have identities, nationality, health care, can go to school, work for their government, join the military, vote and so the list goes on.

Let us reflect for a moment, what it would be like if our children did not have those things we all take for granted? Life would be unpleasant. This condition of “non-being” is the state of many millions of children today and it is our duty and privilege to be able to do something about this during this workshop.

A birth certificate is a ticket to citizenship. Without one, an individual does not officially exist and therefore lacks legal access to the privileges and protections of a nation. Civil registration is also the basic tool by which an efficient government counts its citizens and plans the schools, health centres and other services they need. Yet many nations lack effective systems for recording births. Government development plans are distorted when all births are not registered because of lack of adequate information.

It is your role as registrars and administrators in health, planning and statistics to ensure children from your countries are registered. Through you, Governments, UNICEF and all our partners will continue to invest in making sure that children will be registered and will have their first and most basic right – a birth certificate.

I take this opportunity to wish you fruitful discussions on how we can work together and best move forward to improve birth registration in our countries.
D. POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Dr Victor Karunan
UNICEF

BIRTH REGISTRATION
A Child's First Right

VISITOR KARUNAN
Senior Adviser
Adolescent Development and Participation
Programmes Division
UNICEF HQ NY

The Child's First Right
- As a right in itself: name, identity, nationality
- As a pre-requisite to fulfilling other rights:
  - Protection from early marriage, trafficking, child labor
  - Identification following war or displacement
  - Early recruitment in the armed forces
  - Ensuring that immunization, school enrollment, sanitation reaches all children
  - Orphaning following HIV/AIDS
- As an essential foundation to guarantee the identity, choices, access to services and protection from abuse and exploitation for all children

A World Fit for Children
Adopted by Governments during the UN Special Session on Children (May 2002)

"Develop systems to ensure the registration of every child at or shortly after birth, and fulfill his or her right to acquire a name and a nationality, in accordance with national laws and relevant international instruments"

Some Hard Facts
- 41% of births not registered worldwide
- 50 million new born not registered + millions not registered in the past
- 70% births not registered in Sub-Saharan Africa (17 million)
- South Asia: 40% of world's unregistered (22.5 million)
- East Asia and Pacific: 22% births not registered (7 million)

UNICEF's Strategic Plan
- 2002-2005: Birth registration as a target under IECO
  - Linked to Immunization and Child Protection
  "...to promote more effective birth registration systems, with particular focus on the registration of children in highly disadvantaged groups and families in geographical areas with the worst social indicators"
- 2006-2009: Birth registration as a target under Child Protection
  "...free and compulsory registration on births with focus on excluded groups and communities...strengthening of birth registration systems and advocating for free and compulsory birth registration"

UNICEF's Strategy
- Including birth registration in the country programme of cooperation with Governments
- Involving partners (donors, NGOs, religious and academic institutions, etc.)
- Research - to understand the situation and monitor trends
- Advocacy with Governments, Donors, International Agencies
- Exchange of experiences : Uganda-Bangladesh
- Facilitating/supporting technical exchange across countries
- Training and Capacity building - government agencies, community level, NGOs, young people

Key Partnerships
- The UN system: UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Statistical Division
- Plan International & NGO Committee on UNICEF : The Unregistered Children's Project (Asia)
- UNICEF and PLAN : collaboration in Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa

What are the issues?
- "Political will" :
  - Law reform, decentralization, resources, citizenship issues
- Little perceived value for registration
  - Awareness, creating demand, language and cultural/indigenous differences
- Weak systems
  - Infrastructure, integration with other services, health, school
- Involving the community
  - Youth, elders, church, school
**Implications for an Un-Registered Child**

- Limited choices to exercise the right to services:
  - Access to education
  - Access to health services
  - Eligibility for welfare benefits
  - Legal employment
  - Safe travel/migration
  - Legal protection
- Governments unable to fulfill obligations:
  - Lack of data/information to plan and budget for social services
  - Do not target unregistered children
  - Monitoring for emergency preparedness
  - Assessing impact of social services

**Key Consequences for Children**

- Weakens families as the first line of protection for children
- Continues cycles of poverty, abuse and exploitation
- Undermines the inherent right to human dignity of children
- In other words: UNREGISTERED CHILDREN = NO IDENTITY = INCREASED VULNERABILITY = "INVISIBLE" IN SOCIETY

**The Way Forward - Eight Recommendations**

- Legislation for compulsory registration of births
- Free birth registration
- Time limits and penalties
- Integration with service delivery systems (health, education)
- De-centralization
- Awareness-raising, advocacy and communications
- Community (children/youth) participation
- Partnerships for birth registration

**Some Innovative Examples**

- **INDONESIA**: New Civil Registration Law – followed by Presidential Decree in 2002
- **VIETNAM**: 2001 “Year of Birth Registration”
- **THAILAND**: Mobile Birth Registration
- **BANGLADESH**: De-centralization & integration with health system
- **UGANDA**: Integration with local government
- **ARMENIA**: Community level awareness raising and advocacy

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**Thank You**

**Questions?**

**Comments?**
Dr Shabir Ahmed
PLAN International, Cambodia

Point of the project: building a sustainable civil registration system – Mobile Registration Campaign (focus on birth registration)

Objectives:
- Establish and strengthen civil registration system in the country
- Hands-on training to government officials on civil registration
- Cleaning the backlog of more than 90% un-registrared population
- Advocacy and public information about importance of civil registration

Introduction

Some basic facts about Cambodia relevant to civil registration

- 12.8 Million Population

Annex

Government’s ownership at planning and implementation level is the fundamental principle of the project

Principles:
- Leadership and ownership of the Cambodian Government
- Participation of Cambodian Officials in planning and implementation
- Outside support to build local capacities and plug the gaps

Project Partners

Plan International Cambodia provides technical support to the MOI for planning and implementation of the project

- Support MOI in decision-making through policy inputs
- 21 United Nations Volunteers for 7 months
- Project Offices for field coordination and support
- Public Information Campaign
- Logistical support
- Monitoring support
Chapter Four: Annexes

Pilot Project

A need-driven initiative must unearth real issues and devise a mechanism to address them

Issues Identified:

- Commune Council, responsible for civil registration, lacked capacity
- General indifference towards civil registration
- Unclear roles at different levels—policy making and implementation
- Lack of awareness among population
- Ineffective logistic and material support system

Despite numerous issues, the pilot project achieved remarkable success, setting the stage for nation-wide campaign by the Government:

- Pilot study in six communes; two achieved 100%.
- Role of centers, provinces, district and commune identified.
- Public information strategy evaluated
- Outlines of the National Policy identified

Pilot Project

Commitment—registration under the trees

National Implementation

Measures taken by the Government of Cambodia show great political will to achieve the objectives of this project:

- Prime Minister approved the launch of mobile civil registration as a priority of the Government of Cambodia
- National Committee for mobile registration formed—Secretary of State MOI as its President
- 24 Provincial Committees formed to support districts and communes
- National Plan of Action was framed for nation-wide registration
Rational Implementation

Measures Taken by the Government of Cambodia show great commitment to achieve the objective of civil registration:

- Law relating to registration of newborn babies amended
- Fine on birth registration waived off until 31st Aug 2005
- Over 13,000 officials were trained to carry out mobile registration
- Large number of registration books printed & delivered to provinces

National Implementation

Over 13,000 Officials Trained for nation-wide registration

Sanitation, Education and Sustainability

- Drawing on the street
- Drawing on paper and Dazo
- Races and Tug of War
- Entertainment
- Casual food for the whole day

National Implementation

Nation-wide Mobile Registration started on 1st October 2004

Within 7 months of nation-wide operation 38% Cambodians received their birth certificates:
- Registration: 2003-2004
  - 1,361,186 (1.9%)
- Registration October 04 to April 2005
  - 4.9 Million (38%)
- Female registered: 51%
Chapter Four: Annexes

Introduction

Pilot Project

National Implementation

Path Forward

Birth registration legally exist!

Mobile registration is not without issues; the scale itself is a huge challenge

- Logistical and material support
- Selection and training of over 15,000 registration officials
- Awareness about the importance of birth registration
- Reporting
- Remote communication problems
- Illiteracy
- Mindset and attitude

Path Forward

Government needs technical support to manage the data and work out a mechanism for continuous updating

- Continuous technical and logistics assistance for mobile registration
- Effective advocacy and public information campaign
- Support in computerization of registration data
- Suggest necessary amendments in laws protecting children’s rights

Thank You!
Register births: UNICEF

By REHU IOKAGI

A child who is not registered at birth is in danger of being shut out of society and denied the right to an official identity, says United Nations Children's Fund representative Gillian Melia.

Opening the Pacific regional meeting on birth registration this week, she said registration of birth was a country's first official recognition of a child.

"The right to name a child and nationalise is one of the most fundamental human rights. Unregistered children can face discrimination, be subject to child labour trafficking, conscription and are challenged with a lack of basic services," Ms Melia said.

She said underprivileged children who were not registered at birth and who did not have a certificate to prove it could be denied access to basic services such as education and health care.

"Also, when children are not registered, they cannot legally prove their existence or their age and their poverty and vulnerability is exploited.

Ms Melia said a birth certificate was a ticket to citizenship and if an individual did not have one, "the individual would be deemed not to exist" and therefore lacks legal access to the privileges and protection of a nation.

"Civil registration is also the basic tool by which an efficient government counts its citizens and plans the schools, health centres and other services they need," she said.

She said most of the countries lack effective systems for recording births, government development, plans are disempowered when births are not registered because of lack of adequate information. Ms Melia said. "Through a child may have a name, if not registered and given a national identity or citizenship by a State he or she was stateless or non-existent."

Children who are not registered at birth face major disadvantages in life.
Birth registration important

A child who is not registered at birth is in danger of losing out on her or his identity - a recognised name and nationality.

That was the gist of the message delivered by Ms Gillian Messop, the UNICEF representative, at yesterday’s Regional Birth Registration Workshop at the Josiah Moe Mission Centre in Suva.

"Registration of birth is a country’s first official recognition of a child. The right to a name and nationality is one of the most fundamental human rights," Ms Messop said.

"Unregistered children can face discrimination, be subject to child labour, trafficking, conscription and are challenged with lack of access to basic services such as health and education."

Ms Messop told the workshop that underprivileged children who are not registered at birth and who do not have a certificate to prove they can be denied access to basic services such as education and health care even where facilities for these exist.

"They are denied the protection that existing laws may offer to children. This could be protection against being exploited as child labourers, against trafficking, sexual exploitation, early marriage or from conscription into armed groups," she said.

Ms Messop said that although a child may have a name, "if he or she is not recognised and given a national identity or citizenship by the State, he or she is stateless or non-existent and therefore, denied social, economic, political and protection rights."

Registry law handicapped

The legislation that looks after civil registration in the country is handicapped and has flaws, says Registrar General Laisey Manadigo.

Presenting at the Josiah Moe Mission Centre at Nasua yesterday, she said the legislation had to be reviewed to accommodate the many problems that arise outside of it.

"In particular, identify theft, acquisition of birth certificates from non-Fijians for obtaining passports and visa and acquisition of birth certificates through change of name for those who have been deported from overseas," she said. She said there was a need to upgrade the security features in certification process for paper seal to avoid tampering and falsifying certificates.

Section 26 of the Birth, Deaths and Marriages Act provides acceptance of both certificates as a true and correct information and should be received in all courts as evidence of the birth and all particulars contained should be recorded with further proof of the matter.

Mrs Manadigo said there was a need to upgrade the integrity of the system and most importantly maintain networking between agencies including health, immigration, police, overseas missions in Fiji and the registry.

"Procrastination is seen to be one of the drawbacks in registering a child in Fiji particularly for Fijians," she said.

She said they have a unique way of taking things lightly and adhering to delays.

Also villages on remote islands and villages did not have the privileges to be acquainted with the birth, deaths and marriages computerisation system.

Mrs Manadigo said the disability arose due to financial constraints and complete isolation from the centre of operation.

The Fiji Times - Saturday May 28, 2005, page 16
Unregistered children can be shut out

By LICI MOYONO

A birth certificate may seem like it is just a piece of paper, but for those children who are born in developing countries, it is as essential as the air they breathe. The lack of a birth certificate can mean that these children are denied access to education, health care, and other basic rights.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is working to ensure that the region’s children have birth certificates. In Fiji, children without birth certificates are often stigmatized and denied access to services.

Maheleho said these children were struggling to access basic services such as education and health care due to the lack of a birth certificate.

The UNICEF report identified several reasons why children were not registered:

1. Parents or guardians may not know about the process of registering a child.
2. Parents or guardians may not have the necessary documents to register a child.
3. Parents or guardians may be unable to afford the registration fee.

Chidren who are unregistered face discrimination and are at risk of being trafficked for child labor or other forms of exploitation. They are also at risk of being denied access to education and health care.

Maheleho said he had asked the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Human Rights to address the issue of unregistered children.

"The lack of a birth certificate can mean that these children are denied access to basic services," he said.

The Fiji Times, Wednesday June 1, 2005, page 17

F. CLOSING REMARKS

Summary of Dr Jimmie Rodger’s closing remarks

Dr Rodgers began by reflecting on his own experiences of birth registration, and then went on to present a regional perspective. He pointed out that there is now an opportunity to include enhancement of registration mechanisms as an objective in the Pacific Plan, which is being prepared in 2005. He suggested formation of a regional registrars association to link registrars in individual countries under the auspices of the Pacific Plan, with a common database of useful information that could be accessed on line.

He pointed out that the process of enhancing birth registration should begin with improving national systems, then share information at the regional level. This will require support from regional organizations, and it is essential that governments make birth registration a priority if they are to attract donor funding. Dr Rodgers also emphasised the importance of country ownership of any initiatives, and of realism as regards objectives at both the national and regional level. The challenge is for countries to utilise the opportunities provided by donors and other partners to ensure that the greatest benefit is obtained.

Summary of Dr Victor Karunan’s closing remarks

Dr Karunan noted that this was the first time Pacific countries had come together to discuss birth registration, then made five key points. First, birth registration is only part of comprehensive civil registration systems, and needs to be seen as part of a comprehensive civil registration system if it is to be sustainable. Second, there is a need to be passionate in advocacy of birth registration, effective in implementing plans and strategic in forming partnerships. Third, ownership is crucial and country governments must take the lead while the role of donors is to support and assist. Fourth, country strategies must be supported by regional strategies. Finally, discussions on birth registration also provide an opportunity to encourage societies to be responsible towards children and protect their rights.

Dr Karunan concluded by reaffirming the importance of social mobilisation so that parents, teachers, elders, village council members, parliamentarians, donors and UN agencies see themselves as accountable for the future of children.
“The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.”