



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems



CONCEPT NOTE

Technical Side Workshop: Marriage and Divorce Registration

Topic: Towards International Technical Standards and Guidelines on Marriage and Divorce Registration

Organized by: The Global Community of Practice on Marriage Registration, coordinated by the UNFPA Centre of Excellence for CRVS

Date: 14 October 2025 | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Venue: Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

1. Background

Civil registration of vital events, including marriage and divorce, is fundamental to ensuring legal identity, protection of rights, and access to services. Despite global recognition of the importance of comprehensive civil registration systems, marriage and divorce registration remain underdeveloped in many countries. Challenges such as a lack of harmonized procedures, socio-cultural barriers, and limited legal frameworks hinder the effectiveness and completeness of registration.

The Community of Practice (CoP) on Marriage Registration, consisting of global, regional, and national stakeholders, civil registration authorities, legal experts, and development partners, recognizes the urgent need to develop practical, context-relevant guidelines for marriage and divorce registration.

2. Objectives of the side event

The side event aims to convene global civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) experts and senior officials from national governments to discuss the importance of strengthening marriage and divorce registration systems and the development of comprehensive Marriage and Divorce Registration Guidelines, serving as a reference tool for countries seeking to improve or establish interoperable systems.

The event will provide a platform to:

1. Present and review preliminary reports on the Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean regional assessments of the marriage and divorce registration systems.



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems



2. Review, discuss, and further develop the draft Africa and the Arab States regional guidelines on marriage and divorce registration, and build consensus on the scope and content of the guidelines.
 - To present the rationale, structure, and intended use of the guidelines.
 - To collect stakeholder input and recommendations on critical thematic areas (legal frameworks, data standards, cross-border recognition, gender sensitivity, etc.).
 - To share country experiences, lessons learned, and promising practices.
 - To outline a roadmap for drafting, validation, and adoption of the guidelines.
3. Engage stakeholders in identifying core components and challenges affecting marriage and divorce registration systems globally.
4. Facilitate dialogue on legal, socio-cultural, religious, and administrative considerations in the marriage and divorce registration system strengthening.

4. Expected outcomes

1. A preliminary draft framework outlining key components of the Marriage and Divorce Registration Guidelines.
 - Stakeholder consensus on priority themes, implementation strategies, and timelines.
 - Commitments from stakeholders to support the development and piloting of the guidelines.
2. Strengthened collaboration among regions and countries, CRVS experts, and development partners (the Community of Practice on Marriage Registration)

5. Participants

- Global experts on gender, women, and civil registration
- Senior government representatives (civil registration actors, representatives of the ministries of justice, and gender ministries)
- Civil society organizations
- United Nations agencies and development partners
- Researchers and academics
- Representatives from regional economic communities and statistical bodies (StatAfric), regional bodies such as LAS

6. Agenda

Time	Session
08:00–08:30 AM	<i>Breakfast and networking</i>
08:30 – 9:00 AM	Introductions



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems



<p>9:15 - 9:30 AM</p>	<p>Welcome Remarks - Priscilla Idele, Chief, Data, Population and Development, UNFPA HQ</p> <p>Objectives of the event - Violet Kinuthia, Technical Specialist and Manager, the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems, UNFPA HQ</p>
<p>09:15 – 11:00 AM</p>	<p>Moderator: Fred Okwayo, Technical Advisor, Population Data Policy, UNFPA ESARO</p> <p>Presentation of the regional assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Africa report - David Nzeyimana, Consultant and CRVS Specialist, UNFPA ESARO - Latin America and the Caribbean (19 countries study) - Claudina Zavattiero, Coordinadora Actividades de Población y Desarrollo, UNFPA Paraguay, LACRO - Arab States - Willis Odek, Population and Development Advisor, UNFPA ASRO - Asia and the Pacific (Indonesia Marriage and Registration and Ending Child Marriage) - Widi Sari, Researcher, PUSKAPA, Universitas, Indonesia - West and Central Africa (Presentation Marriage Registration in WCAR) - Irina Dincu (online) and Boladé Banougnin, Programme Analyst, UNFPA WCARO
<p>11:00 – 11:15 PM</p>	<p>Health Break</p>
<p>11:15 AM – 12:00 PM</p>	<p>Panel Moderator: William Muhwava, Chief, Demographics and Social Statistics, Africa Centre for Statistics, UNECA</p> <p>Panel Discussion: Best practices and innovative approaches in marriage & divorce registration globally (2 from each region)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kenya - Registrar of Marriages, - Lesotho - Malawi - Sierra Leone - Burundi - Ghana



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems



12:00 –12:30 AM	Panel Moderator: Guatemala CoP Representative Latin America and the Caribbean - Guatemala - Mexico City
12:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Panel Moderator: Willis Odek, UNFPA Arab States Regional Office - Jordan - Algeria - Djibouti - Somalia
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Lunch
2:00 –3:00 PM	Presentation of draft Framework - David Nzeyimana, UNFPA ESARO
3:00 – 4:00 PM	Plenary feedback - Gloria Mathenge, UNICEF WCARO
4:00 – 4:30 PM	Conclusion, way forward, and closing - Fred Okwayo, UNFPA ESARO
4:30 – 5:00 PM	Tea and departure

7. Organizers

This event is convened by the Community of Practice on Marriage Registration, with technical and logistical support from the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems house at the UNFPA, the International Development Research Centre, UNECA, and UNICEF, academic and research institutions, development partners, and national institutions. It is part of broader efforts to strengthen civil registration systems in alignment with international standards and SDG targets, especially Goal 16.9: “By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.”