Ninth African Symposium on Statistical Development

Promoting Use of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Support of Good Governance in Africa

Opening Statement

by

Dr. Charles Leyeka Lufumpa
Director, Statistics Department
African Development Bank Group

Gaborone, Botswana
17 February, 2014
His Excellency, Vice President Dr. Kedikilwe
Honorable Ministers present,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the African Development Bank Group, let me begin by thanking the Government and people of the Republic of Botswana for the warm hospitality that they have graciously accorded to us on this important occasion. The presence of the Vice President in our midst manifests the commitment of the Government to statistical development. We would also like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to the Department of Civil and National Registration of the Ministry of Labor and Home Affairs and Statistics Botswana as others that have contributed to make this symposium possible. The quality of the organizational arrangements and the level of participation manifest the commitment of African Governments and progress we have made in the statistical development agenda as an instrument for economic management.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics as Agenda of International Statistical Initiatives

Mr. Chairman,

The theme of the symposium, “Promoting Use of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Support of Good Governance in Africa” is very timely. It comes at a time when most African countries are implementing medium-term development strategies anchored on good statistics to inform the process. It also comes at a time when the international community is preparing to transition to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda with poverty eradication, broad-based inclusive growth and good governance at the core. The development path calls for a “Data Revolution” in support of the post-2015 agenda emphasizing the need for disaggregated baseline data to help monitor benchmarks, targets and development impacts. In this regard, Civil
Registration and Vital Statistics provide ideal administrative instruments for making available real-time disaggregated data for effective planning and decentralized policy management. The African Development Bank is honored to be part of this initiative.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Development Bank’s fundamental mission is to reduce poverty and boost sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Africa. It does this by providing technical & financial support not only through project and program lending, but also through building statistical capacity in African countries, including CRVS. Currently, we are making preparations to step up statistical support to African countries in line with the priorities of the Bank’s Ten Year Strategy for the period 2013-2022 and the post-2015 development agenda.

Yesterday we had discussions on some of the key statistical activities we have been supporting in African countries and which are aimed at promoting the continental regional integration and growth agenda. These include the International Comparison Program for Africa, the Africa Infrastructure Knowledge Program, the Action Plan to Improve Food and Agriculture Statistics in Africa, the peer review mechanism among African countries and of course the Africa Program on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) which is the main focus of this Symposium.

Other initiatives supported by the Bank include the African Information Highway (AIH) program which is intended to significantly increase access to quality data for managing and monitoring development results in African countries; including tracking progress on the MDGs as well as meeting the data needs for the post 2015 development agenda. The Africa Information
highway also serves as a knowledge center for collecting, assessing, and sharing data with African countries, pan-African partners, and the international development community at large.

Distinguished Participants,

Our work program on CRVS responds to the initiatives of the CRVS Regional Core Group and the declaration of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration on reforming and improving CRVS systems on the continent. Our focus has been on assisting African countries to undertake comprehensive assessments of their CRVS systems and formulate strategic action plans. Last year we trained a pool of African CRVS experts in these areas and since August last year, the Bank has engaged some of these experts to facilitate assessments in countries like Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia and Burkina Faso. The Bank will continue to support countries on a need basis.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While noting the progress being made in advancing the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics agenda on the continent, we are happy to note that the current Symposium will also focus on reviewing existing business processes and systems, on identifying challenges to their relevance to good governance; and, identifying reforms as necessary.

In addition, this Symposium should also provide a forum for discussing and preparing a Resolution on Africa’s position to be articulated at the Identity Management Conference in Seoul in September this year which will be attended by Ministers responsible for Civil Registration in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Caribbean as well as Directors of Civil Registration.
Mr. Chairman,

On its part, the African Development Bank will continue to enhance its support to the regional CRVS initiative. To this end, we will continue to work closely with Pan-Africa institutions and other partners on a comprehensive program to improve civil registration and vital statistics in Africa to support good governance.

In terms of the way forward, we expect the following outcomes from this Symposium in setting the future agenda for CRVS in Africa:

*Firstly*, A Declaration that commits Civil Registration Offices and National Statistical Offices to accelerate their efforts in reforming the management and implementation of CRVS systems in order to promote good governance on the continent;

*Secondly*, we expect countries to commit to the adoption of strategies that facilitate the implementation of the most efficient business processes for achieving a comprehensive and efficient CRVS system in the shortest possible time; and,

*Thirdly*, countries should recommit to the roadmap for conducting country assessments and developing national CRVS action plans to include other statistical areas as directed by the African Ministers responsible for CRVS in their conference declarations of 2010 and 2012.

Mr. Chairman, let me end my remarks here and wish everyone a highly successful meeting.

Thank you.