

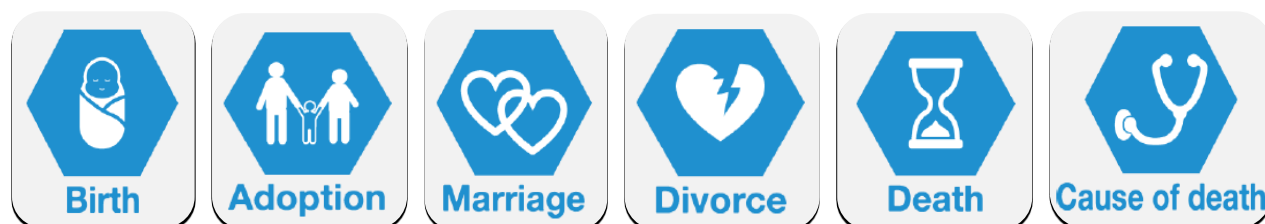
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU



MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

VANUATU National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) POLICY

2017 - 2030



An integrated Strategy for the improvement and strengthening of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, and bringing the Government closer to the people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Government of Vanuatu acknowledges the engagement of the many individuals, organizations and the member of the Vanuatu Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Taskforce (CRVS) who provided valuable perspective, ideas, and support throughout the process that has given production to this policy as a first for Vanuatu.

Further, the Government of Vanuatu is grateful for the assistance made by our dedicated development partners either as part of the CRVS Task Force, technical support and financial support and in particular pay special acknowledgement to UNICEF, WHO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) for their overall joint technical guidance and ongoing support.

We are indebted to Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) and its supporting partners for the technical support for all regional initiatives aiming at strengthening CRVS in the Pacific region which has tremendously benefited Vanuatu.

We are grateful to other Civil Registry partners who continue to support Civil Registry initiatives through specific funds, personnel, equipment and other resources.

It is our vision that this policy document will bind us together as we jointly act to improve and strengthen CRVS in Vanuatu.

FOREWARD

Many children are born and people of all ages die without their births and deaths ever recorded. According to a study conducted by UNICEF in 2008, it was found that only 26 percent of children under 5 years of age living in Vanuatu were registered. According to the study, the difficulties in capturing births that occurred in communities outside of hospitals and health centres including custom villages are: high reliance on family to transfer data between departments and the cost involved in travelling to a registration centre; and the cost of registration, are considered to be the main attributes to such low birth registration.

This Policy expresses a firm commitment of the Vanuatu Government to maximize the contribution, efficiency, and effectiveness of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in achieving the country's National vision of "A Stable, Sustainable and Prosperous Vanuatu". It also serves to gain the support of development partners to assist in strengthening CRVS through complete registration of births, marriages and deaths; and as an effective coordination instrument of efforts of all the various stakeholders towards achieving the Government's commitment. The Policy also help to promote reliable vital statistics as an impetus to the development of appropriate national policies and planning to social development and essential services such as education and health.

The National Policy (2017 – 2030) is aligned with the Government's overall National objectives and priorities (National Sustainable Development Plan [NSDP] 2016 – 2030), and makes linkages to the CRVS Regional Action Framework (RAF) 2014 – 2024, under UNICEF-WHO-SPC support, which provides useful insights during the Policy formulation process.

In implementing the National Policy and Strategies for CRVS, The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) is applying a multi-sectoral approach along with efforts to strengthen civil registration. MoIA is committed to taking the lead by adopting a whole-of-Government approach participation. That is by engaging relevant Government ministries, private sector, civil society organizations, NGOs and communities.

Join me and the Government of Vanuatu in embracing this integrated approach to improving and strengthening CRVS, and bringing the government closer to the people. This is in order to ensure our children are protected with appropriate legal identity and by getting all citizens registered through the regional initiative to "*Get everyone in the picture*", all stakeholders are herein entrusted to contribute, take ownership in and be accountable for the sector's development.

Honourable Andrew Solomon Napuat – MP
Minister of Internal Affairs

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	2
FOREWARD	3
CONTENTS	4
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. POLICY FRAMEWORK.....	14
3. POLICY GOALS.....	14
4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	16
5. CRVS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 - 2030.....	17
6. REFERENCES.....	19

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BAG – Brisbane Accord Group

BNC – Birth Notification Certificate

BRAF – Birth Registration Application Form

CHF – Clinic and Health Facility

CoD – Cause of Death

CSO – Civil Status Office

CRVSD – Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Department

CSD – Civil Status Department

ESCAP – Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

HIS – Health Information System

ICD10 – International Classification of Diseases version 10

IDF – Inpatient Discharged File

M & E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MoE – Ministry of Education

MoH – Ministry of Health

MoIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

MSG – Multi-Stakeholder Group

NDF – Notice of Death Form

NSDP – National Sustainable Development Plan

PVSAP – Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan

RAF – Regional Action Framework

TBA – Traditional Birth Attendant

UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

VCH – Vila Central Hospital

VNPF – Vanuatu National Provident Fund

VNSO – Vanuatu National Statistics Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy will be the first policy for Vanuatu in addressing the area of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS). The policy gives overarching directions to register every events (births, deaths, marriages, divorce and adoption) that happens in Vanuatu.

It expresses a commitment of the Government of Vanuatu to maximize the contribution, efficiency and effectiveness of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in achieving the National Vision of “A Stable, Sustainable and Prosperous Vanuatu” and serves as an instrument for an effective coordination of efforts of all the various stakeholders towards achieving this commitment.

Further, CRVS and its stakeholders recognize through the CRVS Comprehensive Assessment, the following to be integral aspects of the Policy.

1. Building political commitment and support
2. Strengthening Coordination
3. Improving registration coverage
4. Data sharing and coordination
5. Strengthening CRVS through the health system
6. Strengthening CRVS reporting
7. Greater recognition of the CRVS
8. Improved resourcing across registry functions
9. Clear processes and supportive legislation

A set of approaches and principles, which if cooperatively implemented, will not only achieve individual targets but also the overall objective of this Policy.

1. National-wide strategy
2. Multi-sectoral approach
3. Community engagement
4. Whole-of-Government approach
5. Coordinating Mechanisms
6. CRVS System Strengthening
7. Long-term sustainability

Implementation of this Policy will fall into the remit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as the Ministry responsible for CRVS. The Ministry will be supported by the national CRVS Committee and the Multi-stakeholder Group (MSG). These supporting groups will have the primary responsibility for the further development and implementation of this Policy. Overarching support will be provided by the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Department (CRVSD) and core relevant Government Ministries and Departments, NGOs, Development partners, Community Organizations and the Civil Society will be responsible for the implementation of this Policy in their respective areas.

Its implementation will be through a Multi-sectoral approach supported by the implementation plan as well as expenditure frameworks and budgets of respective stakeholders. Initiatives under this Policy, requiring public funding, will be funded from regular funds of respective stakeholders (including regular budgets of

respective Government Ministries and departments). The Government will seek support from development partners and the civil society organizations for the implementation of this policy.

Implementation plan will be developed and implemented upon adoption of this Policy. The Plan is in three phases and the Government envisages the overall plan will cover a 15 year period, in alignment with the Vanuatu government's National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP: SOC 6:9) and CRVS Regional Action Framework (RAF).

The implementation will be supported by an effective Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (M&E). The National CRVS Committee will report on the implementation progress of this Policy on an annual basis.

The Government will seek to ensure that the CRVS National Policy is sufficiently up-to-date, and will generally aim to review after each phase from its initial adoption.

1. INTRODUCTION

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS), according to United Nations ESCAP, it is “the continuous, permanent, compulsory and complete recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events of the population in accordance with the law.”¹ Registration of vital events (notably, live births, adoptions, Marriages, divorce, deaths and causes of deaths) grants a person’s right to recognition as a person before the law and their relationship with the state.

Recording of every vital life events also provides the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) with the opportunity to produce the most accurate, complete and timely statistics on health and demographics of the population. These vital statistics provide information that bridges the gap between national censuses and combined with other economic and social indicators, they provide the basis for the calculation of national and subnational population averages for making regional and international comparisons.

“CRVS is the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events of the population in accordance with the law.”

CRVS is important for the individual as it provides documentary evidence and permanent record of their legal identity and proves their civil status and family relationships. It facilitates access to essential services such as healthcare, education and social protection such as the Vanuatu National Provident Fund (VNPF). In addition, it enables the political participation of the individual through his/her voting rights, property ownership, recourse to justice, formal employment, inheritance and allows the individual to have access to financial services. CRVS also offers the basis for identity document of the individual such as a Passport and National Identification Card.

To the society, CRVS provides information for better social, economic, infrastructure and health policy decisions and targeted interventions. It reinforces accountability, transparency and participation for good governance, include ensuring the integrity of the electoral lists. CRVS allows the monitoring of levels and trends in population changes through fertility, mortality and causes of deaths.

These critical functions and background provides the vision of National CRVS Policy and the basis of the Policy’s road map in establishing and strengthening CRVS in Vanuatu.

Policy Context

The study conducted by UNICEF in 2008 provides the context and agenda of this Policy document. Difficulties in capturing births that occurred in communities outside of hospitals and health centres including custom villages; high reliance on family to transfer data between departments, and the need to improve coverage and accessibility to registration, are addressed. Additional barrier in hindering people from registering the birth of their children is the cost involved in travelling to a registration centre and the cost of registration (which has now been lifted) is also addressed with greater significance placed on registration of vital events. Already the Government of Vanuatu and its development partners, have worked on a number of national and community-focussed initiatives.

Vanuatu as a country, needs to know how many people are born and die each year – and the main causes of their deaths in order to develop a well-functioning health systems and to design effective public health

¹ Get Everyone in the Picture, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, UN ESCAPE, page 3, 2014.

policies and measure their impact. CRVS identifies the most pressing health issues, inequities in service delivery and the burden of disease in the population.

Vanuatu is among other countries in the Asia Pacific region considered to have no complete or a weak responsive CRVS systems that meet relevant international standards. “Reporting completeness of vital registration from routine CRVS systems are considered too low to enable data correction to be used directly to derive estimates of mortality level in the country. Such measures including Life Expectancy are derived from demographic estimates from population censuses and surveys”².

The endorsement of the United Nation’s “**Get everyone in the picture**” regional initiative has intensified the government’s efforts and participation in working collaboratively with development partners aiming at accelerating and focusing its efforts in improving the country’s CRVS system. These include building political commitment, regional cooperation in facilitating knowledge exchange and technical assistance, raising awareness and making tools and resources available to support such efforts.

To support the collective efforts from the regional Governments, the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan (PVSAP) was developed and led by the Brisbane Accord group (BAG) as part of the South Pacific Community ten year Pacific Statistics Strategy, 2011 – 2020. BAG, a consortium of Pacific development partners was established to promote country ownership over CRVS improvement and to improve coordination between partner agencies. This was supported by strong Government commitment from almost all other Pacific Island countries which resulted with some tangible results from Vanuatu

“CRVS Policy is an advocacy tool to secure national commitment and to gain the support of development partners to better coordinate and provide technical support... to achieve the best possible CRVS development outcomes.”

The CRVS Policy is developed as a directive and advocacy tool to gain the support of the national government and development partners to better coordinate and provide technical support in ensuring that limited resources are used most effectively to achieve the best possible CRVS development outcomes.

Current System and Practices of Civil Registration

It is a legal requirement under the Vanuatu’s *Civil Status (Registration) Act* [CAP 61] that every births, deaths, marriages and divorces must be registered. It further states that it is a civic duty under the Act that a citizen must declare these vital events. Records of all these vital events are held at the National Civil Registration Office, which is the central civil repository for all vital records.

Registration of Births

The registration of a birth is the first step in the process of formal recognition of an individual by the state. It is estimated that between 15-20 per cent of births in Vanuatu occur at home or in communities or outside of formal health facilities. In many cases, parents do not recognize the importance of registration until they

² 2016 Carter et al. Population Health Metrics; ‘Causes of Death in Vanuatu’.

are required to produce evidence of date of birth.³ The importance of birth registration emerges when the child goes to enroll during the first year of school.

In a remote rural setting, births that occurred at home are often attended to by a Tradition Birth Attendant (TBA). Births at a nearby Community Health Facility (CHF) such as a health center, dispensary or an Aid-Post are attended by a registered nurse or an experience Aid-post worker. In a semi-urban or urban setting most births occurred in the main hospitals. The sparse rural population distribution along with the geographical make-up of the country, creating different settings in which this vital event occurs, can have a significant bearing on the timing, accuracy and the process through which these vital events are declared, and registered.

In rural areas of Vanuatu where seventy percent of the approximately 266,000 total population lives, although, access to Government services such as education and health is steadily improving, people still reside in custom villages, microcosms of customs, attitudes and beliefs. Many people living in these villages do not celebrate birthdays, and often associate their birth dates with coinciding specific traditional events, as they do not know their exact date of birth and age. They were not registered at birth, and neither were their children⁴. For most children, their birth details are captured and registered a few years after birth as late registration, by definition according to the law.

For births occurring in the hospitals, a mother on discharged from the hospital is issued with a Birth Notification Certificate (BNC) by the mid-wife administering the delivery. The BNC provides detail information about the baby's parents and medical condition surrounding the birth. The parents are to ensure that a Birth Registration Application Form (BRAf) is completed by the hospital-based Health Information System (HIS) officer, based on the BNC details. It is then up to the parents to lodge the BRAf with the Civil Registry office in order to have the child officially registered and to be issued with the official Birth Registration Certificate. The issuance of this initial birth registration certificate are free of charge. The parents are only charged when a second copy is demanded by the parents.

An alternative document that could be obtained from the Civil Registry Office (CRO) is the Extract from the Birth Register which provides details of a child's parents or both the mother and father. The Extract tracks all vital events of the registrant from birth, marriage to death.

Any registration done after 21 days of birth is considered as late registration.⁵ A fee is charged for additional copies of an Extract or Birth Registration Certificate thereafter the initial registration or when extracts are requested by families or parents through the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Department.

Registration of Deaths

Like birth, it is a legal requirement in Vanuatu that every death that takes place in the country must be recorded and registered. Registration of death assists families in facilitating the process of legal transfer of land, access to assets or finances, and ultimately giving recognition to the life of the individual who has

³ Child Protection, Counting Every Child Partnerships Lifting Birth Registration Numbers in Vanuatu, UNICEF Pacific, 2014

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

passed. Registration of death also provides an element of accountability even if the cause of the recorded death has not been fully investigated.

1. Community Health Facility (CHF) Deaths

Deaths occurring in a CHF are captured through the community monthly health reporting system. The reported deaths are recorded by the locally trained nurses or nurse-aides at each health facility through a monthly HIS report and are sent to the respective provincial health office. The report includes any deaths in the area served by the CHF staff. The deaths are collated and reported through the monthly HIS report to the Provincial HIS officers who then coded the reported deaths according to the International Classification of Diseases version 10 (ICDv10) and are entered into the national HIS database.

At a CHF, a Notice of Death Form (NDF) is issued which contains the details of the deceased and a single free-text field outlining the Cause of Death (CoD). It is up to the immediate family of the deceased to declare the death at the nearest provincial Civil Registration and Vital Statistics office. Since Death Registration Certificates are not required for performing rural or village burials, registration of deaths is generally regarded as non-mandatory, although the Act clearly states it is obligatory to register deaths. If the deaths are registered, the provincial CRVS office then send the registered deaths through to the national CRVSD in Port Vila to be entered into the Civil Registry database – ‘RegisterVIZ’.

2. Hospital Deaths

For all deaths occurring in the hospital, the immediate relative of the deceased is issued with a medical Death Notification Certificate from the doctor who attended the deceased during their last illness. This notification certificate is issued by the doctor prior to moving the deceased to the morgue. The Inpatient Discharge File (IDF) contains personal details of the deceased along with their medical condition and the underlying CoD. The underlying CoD is recorded according to the principal diagnosis, although additional fields or options are available for recording other causes and accidents or external causes surrounding the death are also included.

The medical Death Notification Certificate is required by the municipal if the dead is to be buried at a municipal cemetery in either Luganville or Port Vila. It is then up to the relatives of the deceased to have the reported death officially registered at the CRVS office after burial. However, it is mandatory to have the deceased registered at the Municipality prior to performing the burial at the municipality cemetery. This is in contrast to a village or rural burial, where a medical Death Notification Certificate is not mandatory. In either case, most registration of the deaths is only done when the immediate relatives of the deceased seeks to have access to the social benefits of the deceased such as VNPF or properties such as land.

To register a death, the medical Death Notification Certificate stating the cause of death has to be presented to the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths.

Any death which is not declared within the prescribed period under the law (within seven days), like birth, is considered as a late declaration under the provisions of *Civil Status (Registration) Act*.

Registration of Marriages

Vanuatu's legislation recognizes the three different forms of marriages namely: custom marriage or traditional marriage, civil marriage and church marriage.

According to the 'Act', any person who desires to be married solely by custom, he will have fulfilled the pre-marital requirements of the custom under which he desires to be married. Every custom marriage is performed in a place and according to the form laid down by local custom.

It is a requirement under the provisions of the *Civil Status Act, Cap. 61* that every civil, religious or custom marriage must be declared and registered within 21 days of marriage. It further states that "Where the marriage is performed by a minister for celebrating marriages, or the person performing the ceremony of marriage and, in the case of a custom marriage, the bridegroom or the head of his family or the head of the bride's family or the chief of the village of either of the parties or an assessor, who was present at the marriage, must thereafter forward to the Registrar or Sub-Registrar on the first occasion possible a notice as Marriage."

All Civil Marriages are to be performed and celebrated by the provincial Secretary General or the President. In the absence of either the provincial Secretary General or the president, the Registrar or the provincial sub-registrar (as gazette) is to perform the marriage ceremony. For all church marriages, only 'Licensed Church Ministers' are to perform such marriages. They are licensed exclusively to perform Church Marriages. The Licensed Ministers are licensed to only perform marriages within their religious affiliation.

Current CRVS Birth Recording System

The increasing number of birth registration by more than double from 26 percent in 2008 to 56 percent in 2014 is a direct result of the CRVS national database. The database was developed and tailored to suit the needs of the Government and key agencies for a decentralized data collection system that captures critical information throughout the 6 provinces of Vanuatu. It is part of the innovative community-based outreach campaigns that focused on capturing the backlog of unregistered births across the country.⁶

The database, and the nature in which it was developed, demonstrates the importance of tailoring resources to suit specific purpose and skills set. As an open source software and the Government of Vanuatu as the owner, is not tied to software changes, and does not incur incremental costs. Although not all provincial hubs are linked up to the central database, it is acknowledged that this initiative is a marked improvement to CRVS decentralization efforts. Agencies through the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Committee (CRVSC) have earmarked connection to a central database as a key priority for the future.⁷

One of the notable achievements of the cross-agency collaboration is through the 2008 MOU between Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which resulted in the permanent placement of a civil registry office at the Port Vila Central Hospital (VCH). Mothers can officially have their babies registered while still in the hospital and will instantly receive a copy of the Birth Registration Certificate with an imbedded baby photo. The hospital-based Civil Registry database is linked to the National CRO's main database – 'RegisterVIZ'. The 'RegisterVIZ' is currently installed in almost all the six provincial hospitals

⁶ Child Protection Case Study, Counting Every Child, Partnerships Lifting Birth Registration Numbers in Vanuatu, UNICEF, 2014.

⁷ Ibid

except for Torba Provincial hospital, where Government's ICT infrastructure and network is yet to be established.

Besides the National CRO in Port Vila, there are also a number of sub-registrars assigned at the six provincial sub-registration offices or rural areas that are assisting the provincial registrars in carrying out registration efforts. The multi-departmental partnership provides avenues for additional services to people seeking to register their children, whilst also attempting to capitalize on 'opportunistic' registration, i.e. providing services at key points close to the areas where the event occurred or key points of contact in the community such as schools and health facilities⁸.

Current CRVS Operating Legal Framework

The Vanuatu Government among other Pacific regional Governments, signed to a number of international conventions that apply to civil registration, most notably the United Nation International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 7 states: "*The child shall be registered immediately after birth and has the right to a name and nationality...*"⁹ Under the convention, it is obligatory that the Vanuatu Government fulfill its commitments and to meeting the key objectives of such declarations as the Ministerial Declaration to '**Get Every One in the Picture**', which proclaimed 2015 to 2024 as an Asian and Pacific CRVS Decade. It further agrees to achieve the key objectives through the endorsed Regional Action Framework (RAF).

The Government recognizes that the success of its efforts on improving CRVS are dependent on national laws and administrative arrangements, typically the shared responsibility of key players or multiple ministries and Government agencies, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Health, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Government statutory institutions – Vanuatu National Provident Fund (VNPF), provincial authorities and community leaders. Hence, CRVS as a Government's development action priority, the leading ministry – the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is committed to take the leadership role in the implementation of the nation-wide, multi-level strategy, through a whole-of-Government approach. It will engage a multi-sectoral stakeholder participation at all levels of service delivery, working in partnership with non-Government sectors, civil society organizations, private sectors and communities.

Concerted efforts and actions led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in partnership with key stakeholders, are needed to increase and improve the registration coverage of births, marriages and deaths to increase the potential socio-economic impact on the individuals, families and on the nation as a whole.

The increase of birth registration rate in the country is seen as a positive result of such partnership where a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Government in 2008, between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Department of Civil Status (Civil Registry), the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health to facilitate birth registration in Vanuatu. The formal agreement sought to address many of the barriers to birth registration and to facilitate registration services to support, rather than inhibit, efforts to register children¹⁰.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ UN Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Preparation of a Legal Framework

¹⁰ Child Protection Case Study, Counting every Child, Partnerships Lifting Birth Registration Numbers in Vanuatu, UNICEF, 2014.

This CRVS National Policy recognizes and is aligned to internal agreements and to the Government's international commitment and obligations to the UN conventions, declarations and the RAF such as the UNCRC which was ratified by the Vanuatu Government in 1992, and the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan (PVSAP), which was endorsed by the Pacific Health Ministers in June 2011. In general, the UNCRC outlines world benchmarks for children's protection and standards, which include their registration at birth.

Given the age of Vanuatu's current *Civil Status (Registration) Act*, changes in the environment in which the registry operates and the understanding of the roles and importance of CRVS, it is likely that current registry operations are under a legal framework that does not reflect current concerns or practice. For instance, although under the current 'Act', it has legal provision to register births, marriages, divorces and deaths, it does not however, clearly state that registration of such life events are compulsory¹¹.

The CRVS Policy is therefore, built on the works that have been undertaken to date and seeks to further strengthen the current practice and to provide a strong legal foundation for the CRVS system by providing a legal and effective environment that encourages the registration of all vital events in a person's life.

Policy Statement

"The Government of Vanuatu is committed to progressing civil registration across the country and improving the quality and use of vital statistics."

Given the age of Vanuatu's current Civil Status (Registration) Act, changes in the environment in which the registry operates and the understanding of the roles and importance of CRVS, it is likely that registry operations are operating under a legal framework that does not reflect current concerns or practice.

2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

The framework of this Policy consist of a set of guiding principles, a national CRVS vision, goal, objective, key strategic areas, and a Policy Implementation Plan

CRVS Vision

The vision of national CRVS is to have a culturally-appropriate yet effective and user-friendly system that registers vital events and that is reliable, responsive and fair and is sustainable.

The system that ensures all vitals events such as births, adoption, marriages, divorces and deaths that occur in Vanuatu are appropriately documented and recorded. The CRVS system that is supported by a comprehensive legislative framework in close collaboration with respective Government departments and stakeholders, NGOs including the civil society.

3. POLICY GOALS

In order to realize its vision, the goal of this policy is to adapt, align and achieve the NSDP Social Pillar Goal Number 6.9 and the regional goals set out under the ESCAP Regional Action Framework for CRVS, in accordance with the national needs. The four goals under RAF are seen as essential output of CRVS systems.

¹¹ Vanuatu Law Service Commission, 2014.

The four main CRVS Policy goals are:

GOAL 1 A: A Complete Civil Registration of births

Policy Objectives:

- 1.1 All births in Vanuatu in a given year are registered.
- 1.2 All children under five years old in Vanuatu have had their birth registered.
- 1.3 All individuals in Vanuatu have had their birth registered

GOAL 1 B: A Complete Civil Registration of deaths

Policy Objectives:

- 1.1 All deaths that take place in Vanuatu in a given year are registered.
- 1.2 All deaths that occur in an area health center in Vanuatu in the given year are registered.
- 1.3 All deaths occurring in a hospital in Vanuatu have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate.

GOAL 2: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births and deaths as necessary to claim identity, civil status and ensuing rights.

Policy Objectives:

- 2.1 All births registered in Vanuatu are accompanied with the issuance of an official Birth Registration Certificate that includes, as a minimum, the individual's name, sex, date and place of birth, and name of parent(s) where known.
- 2.2 All deaths registered in Vanuatu in the given year are accompanied with the issuance of an official Death Registration Certificate which includes, as a minimum, the deceased's name, date of death, sex, age and island of origin or country of origin if the death is of a naturalized citizen.

GOAL 3: A complete civil registration of Marriages and Divorces.

Policy Objectives:

- 3.1 All celebrated marriages in Vanuatu in a given year are registered.
- 3.2 All divorces in Vanuatu in a given year are registered

GOAL 4: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics are produced based on registration records and are disseminated.

Policy Objectives:

- 4.1 Ensure an annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or, alternatively, other valid administrative data sources.
- 4.2 Ensure an annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by the ICD, latest version as appropriate, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or, alternatively, other valid administrative data sources.
- 4.3 All deaths occurring in hospitals or with the attention of a medical practitioner have a cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by the ICD, latest version as appropriate.
- 4.4 The proportion of deaths coded with ill-defined causes reduced in all deaths registered in Vanuatu.
- 4.5 Deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner has their cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards.
- 4.6 Develop key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths using registration records as the primary source, and are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.
- 4.7 Develop key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.
- 4.8 Develop an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous biennium, using registration records as the primary source, and is made available in the public domain.

4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure that the goal and objectives of this Policy are realized this Policy will be implemented through a multi-stakeholder approach. As such, activities reflected in an implementation plan and organized in such a way as to maximize the participation of all relevant Government ministries and stakeholders.

9.1 Mechanisms

This policy will be supported by the National Planning and Statistics Policy. It will be operationalized through a rolling, ten year Implementation Plan that provides a framework of activities and indicators. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually and updated as where appropriate.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) with the support of the national CRVS Committee (CRVSC) will be responsible for the implementation of this Policy. The Director of Civil Registry will Chair the CRVSC with an overall responsibility for coordinating policy implementation, participatory monitoring, evaluation, and reviews. The CRVSC will also serve as an advisory committee to national Multi-sectoral Stakeholder Group (MSG) on matters relating to the implementation of the policy and CRVS developments.

9.2 Monitoring

The MoIA with the support of the CRVSC will monitor the implementation of this policy. The Implementation Plan will be monitored and reported on regularly to measure progress in a coordinated and standardize manner. Monitoring will align to the overall Monitoring and Evaluation (M& E) Framework of the government.

9.3 Reporting

The CRVS committee is to compile an annual report on the implementation of this Policy and submit it to the CRVS MSG. The CRVS committee will endorse the report to the Minister of Internal Affairs. This annual report will focus on the key strategic areas of this policy, and highlight progress, achievement of indicators and other matters relating to the implementation of the Policy. The reports also form the basis of Vanuatu's commitment in meeting its international obligations in reporting against the targets and goals set out by the ESCAP Regional Action Framework and other development plans such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP).

9.4 Review and Evaluation

The CRVS Policy will be formally reviewed after 3 years of adoption, via the CRVSC, under the support and assistance of MoIA. During the review, assessments will be made including all reports to identify the gaps in implementation, where outcomes are not being met and where challenges exist. The review of the Policy will ensure the Policy remains effective, alive and relevant and to ensure it achieves its goal and objectives.

9.5 Resources

Without adequate resources this Policy will be constrained. Government, development partners and NGOs will work together to support resources allocation for implementation. The Government therefore commits to ensuring the appropriation of the resources necessary for implementing the activities and calls upon the active cooperation and assistance of its development partners, NGOs and line Ministries dealing with vital registry and statistics by providing extra-budgetary support and urge all to work together, in enabling the success of this Policy.

5. CRVS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 - 2030

This Implementation Plan ("Plan") is the tool for implementing this Policy and it is designed to be implemented within and beyond the 10 year time frame to 2030. This is in alignment with the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015 – 2025, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2015 - 2030. It will be implemented in 3 phases. Phase I of the Implementation Plan will be implemented within the next three years (2017-2020), while the second phase and third phase will be implemented starting from 2021 – 2025

and 2025 – 2030 respectively. A detail plan for phase 2 and phase 3 implementation will be developed at the end of each respected phases and will include any activities carried over from Phases 1 and 2.

CRVS Strategic and Implementation Plans are contained in the CRVS Strategic Plan document, which is produced to compliment and support the CRVS initiatives in meeting the core objectives of this CRVS Policy.

9.7 Guiding Principles

To optimize the implementation of the CRVS policy there are a number of guiding principles that will bring together and sensitize all stakeholders into taking responsibility and overall accountability in achieving the overarching goal of the national CRVS Policy. These guiding principles include:

1. **Nation-wide strategy** – adopt a national-wide CRVS improvement strategy
2. **Multi-sectoral approach** – adopt a multi-sectoral approach, ensuring that national CRVS Action plans are translated to sectors plans with stakeholder participation.
3. **Community engagement** – adopt an approach with community involvement
4. **Whole-of-Government approach** – adopting RAF and to recognize that there is no single blueprint for improving CRVS systems in every setting. The RAF offers action areas as a broad basis for activities of Government and development partners with flexibility to accommodate and meet the particular circumstances of Vanuatu.
5. **Coordinating Mechanisms** – to adopt effective coordinating mechanisms to ensure CRVS policy and CRVS strategic plans are implemented according to plans. Such mechanisms provide platforms to facilitate harmonization and avoid duplication of activities of local, provincial, national, regional and international stakeholders, including subregional initiatives.
6. **CRVS system strengthening** – Adopt a CRVS system approach built on the values of civil registry, country planning and national development needs.
7. **Long-term sustainability** – adopt sustainable-oriented actions and approached to ensure that each CRVS activity implemented contributes to desired results and long-term sustainability.

6. REFERENCES

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3. UNICEF Pacific, 2014. *Child Protection, Counting Every Child Partnerships Lifting Birth Registration Numbers in Vanuatu*.
4. UN Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Preparation of a Legal Framework
5. Vanuatu Law Service Commission, 2014. *A Review of the Civil Status Registration [CAP61]*, Issues Paper No.01 of 2014.