

High Level Political Dialogue on Birth Registration

November 19, 2020

Declaration

We, African Union Ministers responsible for Civil Registration and Identity Management, within the framework of the AU-UNICEF No Name Campaign launched on 17 June, 2020, virtually gathered on November 19, 2020 for a high level political dialogue on Birth Registration on the theme ***“Towards Universal Birth Registration in Africa: challenges and opportunities during COVID-19”***

PREAMBLE

ACKNOWLEDGING that several legal instruments and protocols of the AU call for universal birth registration, including the African Charter on Human Rights; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child **AND** the commitments taken by African Governments to improve birth registration by promoting good practices in the past decade;

NOTING the provisions on both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 for legal identity for all including universal birth registration and the importance to publish, annually, quality vital statistics from civil registration records to guide policy organs for the improvement of CRVS systems in line with the strategy for harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA2);

RECOGNIZING the importance of aligning the UN Legal Identity Agenda, APAI-CRVS and No Name Campaign to ensure Universal Birth Registration and to secure basic human rights and access to basic social services in an integrated manner;

RECALLING the various declarations from the past five conferences of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration that call for ensuring universal registration of births; and,

FURTHER NOTING, that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic could indeed jeopardize progress made so far in many countries due to lockdowns and restriction of movements.

THE MINISTERS,

APPLAUD, the African Union Commission and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for launching the continental advocacy tagged "**No Name Campaign: For every child legal identity, for every child access to justice**" and acknowledge that lack of legal identity for many Africans is a developmental challenge for Africa's socio-economic transformation, and that registration of children at birth is one of the key elements to accelerate social justice;

ENCOURAGE AU Member States that have implemented innovative approaches to birth registration services leading to considerable progress over the last decade in these countries and **WELCOME** the proposal to have these leading countries as Champions in their respective AU Regions, working closely with their Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for south-south experience sharing and learning;

CALL UPON all AU Member States to sustain their commitment for birth registration for all children including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and those living in conflict zones by increasing financing of birth registration services and making birth registration an essential service in these times of COVID-19 pandemic;

CALL UP on all AU Member States with the support of RECs to accelerate policy and legal reforms that ensure universal Birth Registration without leaving no one behind by removing costs and other barriers to universal access;

CALL UPON All AU Member States to gear investments towards scaling up the already proven solutions, in particular decentralization, digitization and interoperability between civil registration and other social services with a focus on health services to register children at birth;

REQUEST AUC, ECA and UNICEF to work with AU Member States and RECs to align the UN Legal Identity Agenda, APAI-CRVS and No Name Campaign to ensure synergy and avoid duplication of efforts and to assist in documenting and disseminating evidence

of good practices and performance and to engage champion countries to facilitate inter-country learning on birth registration;

CALL UPON AUC, ECA and UNICEF in collaboration with RECs, APAI-CRVS Technical Core Group and partners to support AU Member States to modernize their National Statistics Systems to produce and disseminate harmonized, quality and timely data on CRVS and specifically in birth registration in line with SHaSA2;

APPEAL to AU Development partners for greater consideration of birth registration as a priority for many AU Member States and call for increased financial and technical assistance in that regard; and make birth registration one of their priorities in their international assistance policies and interventions

REQUEST AUC and UNICEF to conduct a review of the implementation of the No Name Campaign, as well as the adopted recommendations and a progress report on the implementation of the declaration to be presented at the 6th Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration that will be held in Mozambique in 2021.