

Conclusion on civil registration

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EXCOM Conclusions, 17 October 2013

The Executive Committee,

Recalling its previous Conclusions, notably Nos. 22 (XXXII), 47 (XXXVIII), 90 (LII), 91 (LII), 95 (LIV), 100 (LV), 101 (LV), 102 (LVI), 105 (LVII), 106 (LVII), 107 (LVIII), 108 (LIX), and 109 (LX), and taking note of relevant UN resolutions,

Recognizing civil registration and documentation, especially birth registration as a proof of birth of a person, contribute to enhancing protection and the implementation of durable solutions, including by documenting links with countries of origin,

Reaffirming that every child shall be registered immediately after birth, without discrimination of any kind,

Recognizing that civil registration systems, which record births, deaths, cause of death, and marriage, provide substantial information for policy and humanitarian planning,

Acknowledging the long-standing generosity extended by host countries, particularly the developing States, some hosting large numbers of refugees, sometimes over a protracted period of time, and the socio-economic and environmental impact on those countries and their communities; and recognizing the necessity for mobilizing the necessary support, including funding to assist countries receiving refugees in line with the principles of equitable burden-sharing, and international solidarity and cooperation,

Noting that the lack of civil registration and related documentation makes persons vulnerable to statelessness and associated protection risks, and that birth registration is often essential to the reduction and prevention of statelessness,

Recognizing the need to further strengthen efforts where there is a low level of birth registration and related documentation, to improve access to civil registration, while acknowledging the need to assist countries hosting large numbers of refugee children, as well as to intensify efforts to implement durable solutions,

- (a) *Urges* States to ensure civil registration and emphasizes that every child shall be registered immediately after birth without discrimination of any kind, taking into consideration that civil registration and, in particular, birth registration provide substantial information for policy and humanitarian planning, through regulations that contribute towards enhancing protection and the implementation of durable solutions;
- (b) *Encourages* States to undertake, in accordance with its own laws and, as appropriate, in cooperation and with the support from UNHCR, any necessary legal and practical measures to overcome the difficulties in conducting civil registration, including through establishing or strengthening existing institutions responsible for civil registration, building their capacity and ensuring the safety and confidentiality of their records;
- (c) *Urges* UNHCR, with the consent of and in full cooperation with the Governments concerned, and, when appropriate in cooperation with other relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as regional organizations and civil society, to facilitate civil registration, in particular birth registration, through for example collecting and sharing good practices, holding technical workshops, capacity building activities, and providing information and advice to concerned persons, and also to abide by the fundamental principles and international norms and standards governing the protection of personal data;
- (d) *Encourages* States to make accessible civil registration, in particular through
 - (i) adopting simplified administrative procedures and, where appropriate, integrating civil registration with other public services including those relating to childbirth, maternal-infant care, immunization and education;
 - (ii) carrying out regular awareness campaigns or community outreach activities;

- (iii) putting in place measures, as appropriate, to ensure that rural or remote locations are reached, such as through, for example, mobile registration units;
 - (iv) considering free birth and death registration in accordance with national laws and regulations; in particular facilitating late registration and the waiving of late registration fees and penalties;
 - (v) supporting the recording of medically certified cause of death, as appropriate;
 - (e) *Encourages* States to request technical and other assistance, if required, from other States, UNHCR and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as civil society and regional organizations;
 - (f) *Requests* UNHCR to provide periodic updates to the Executive Committee, within existing reporting mechanisms, on progress made in the field of civil registration.
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