

# Abstract: A global assessment of civil registration and vital statistics systems: monitoring data quality and progress

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## Summary

Increasing demand for better quality data and more investment to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems will require increased emphasis on objective, comparable, cost-effective monitoring and assessment methods to measure progress. We apply a composite index (the vital statistics performance index [VSPI]) to assess the performance of CRVS systems in 148 countries or territories during 1980–2012 and classify them into five distinct performance categories, ranging from rudimentary (with scores close to zero) to satisfactory (with scores close to one), with a mean VSPI score since 2005 of 0·61 (SD 0·31). As expected, the best performing systems were mostly in the European region, the Americas, and Australasia, with only two countries from east Asia and Latin America. Most low-scoring countries were in the African or Asian regions. Globally, only modest progress has been made since 2000, with the percentage of deaths registered increasing from 36% to 38%, and the percentage of children aged under 5 years whose birth has been registered increasing from 58% to 65%. However, several individual countries have made substantial improvements to their CRVS systems in the past 30 years by capturing more deaths and improving accuracy of cause-of-death information. Future monitoring of the effects of CRVS strengthening will greatly benefit from application of a metric like the VSPI, which is objective, costless to compute, and able to identify components of the system that make the largest contributions to good or poor performance.