

A brief note on the computation of the birth certification rate for under-five children in mainland Tanzania, 2019

Introduction

In recent years, the Government of Tanzania through the Agency responsible for civil registration (Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency-RITA) has initiated a series of measures to improve the birth registration coverage in the mainland and is moving towards setting up a decentralised and comprehensive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system at a rapid pace.

One of such initiatives is the decentralised birth registration system that addresses the core issues of accessibility and affordability through decentralisation, 'one-step, one-visit' registration and certification process, and a fee waiver. The new system aims to register newborns within six weeks of birth at health facilities and ward offices and clears the backlog for children aged 1-4 years in line with the SDG indicator 16.9.1 that focuses on children below five years of age.

Currently, the decentralised birth registration system is in operation in 13¹ out of 26 regions and has registered over 3.6 million under-five children since 2013. The new system is the government initiative and it is implemented with the technical support of UNICEF and with funding from the government of Canada and in partnership with a mobile network company, Tigo.

A unique feature of the new system is the direct data capturing at registration centres using mobile phones, and this makes the registration data available for statistical analysis in real-time through an online dashboard.

Methodology

This brief note explains the methodology used for computation of the birth certification rate for children below five years using the birth registration data from civil registration authority in mainland Tanzania.

Indicator: Percentage of children under five whose births were registered and issued with a birth certificate in mainland Tanzania in 2019

Data source: For the 13 regions where the new birth registration system is in place, the data is available from the dashboard, and for the remaining 13 regions, the data comes from the routine RITA system.

Numerator: Number of under-five children whose birth were registered and issued with a birth certificate in a region

Denominator: Mid-point estimated number of under-five children in a region. Since the children fall between 2015 and 2019, the estimated number pertains to August 2017. August was preferred over July to maintain the yearly cycle of projection as census taking in Tanzania is done in August.

¹ Mbeya, Songwe, Mwanza, Iringa, Njombe, Geita, Shinyanga, Lindi, Mtwara, Mara, Simiyu, Dodoma, and Singida.

Baseline figures: The baseline figures for under-five children with a birth certificate for Mbeya (including Songwe region) and Mwanza region are from Census 2012 as the rollout in these regions was done in 2013 and 2015 respectively; for other regions, they are from Demographic Health Survey 2015-16.

Results:

The overall certification rate for the 13 regions where the decentralised birth registration system is in operation stands at more than 82 per cent improving from less than 10 per cent in 2012. This helped raise the birth certification rate for mainland Tanzania in 2019 to more than 49 per cent from less than 13 per cent in 2012. For details, please refer to the table below.

Region	Est. mid-point U5 Population (August 2017)	U5 children with a birth certificate (2019)	% U5 children with a birth certificate (2019)
Dodoma*	369,943	375,056	100.0
Arusha	287,593	111,065	38.6
Kilimanjaro	209,443	72,180	34.5
Tanga	340,693	57,106	16.8
Morogoro	364,337	45,506	12.5
Pwani	171,377	45,346	26.5
Dar es Salaam	699,568	498,423	71.2
Lindi*	117,773	119,187	100.0
Mtwara*	179,688	174,119	96.9
Ruvuma	228,112	21,662	9.5
Iringa*	136,466	140,316	100.0
Mbeya (including Songwe)*	483,806	397,776	82.2
Singida*	267,836	260,785	97.4
Tabora	493,368	38,296	7.8
Rukwa	232,292	11,690	5.0
Kigoma	463,030	40,763	8.8
Shinyanga*	313,025	244,645	78.2
Kagera	526,899	18,500	3.5
Mwanza*	579,119	236,345	40.8
Mara*	374,713	358,094	95.6
Manyara	293,954	16,703	5.7
Njombe*	97,164	102,217	100.0
Katavi	131,410	4,141	3.2
Simiyu*	345,631	295,529	85.5
Geita*	388,796	300,180	77.2
Tanzania Mainland	8,069,535	3,985,631	49.4
*Decentralized regions			