Main findings

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Where do we stand
Some numbers

• Nearly 230 million children under five have never been registered

• More than half of them live in Asia

• In 2012 alone, 57 million births were not registered with civil authorities – or 4 out of 10 babies delivered worldwide

• Additionally, 1 in 7 of the children who are registered do not have an official birth certificate

• As results there are 290 million children under five without a birth certificate in the world
Birth registration prevalence varies significantly across regions

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by region

- South Asia: 39%
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 44%
- Eastern and Southern Africa: 38%
- West and Central Africa: 47%
- Middle East and North Africa: 87%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 92%
- CEE/CIS: 98%
- Least developed countries: 38%
- World: 65%
The lowest birth registration levels are found in sub-Saharan Africa
Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by country.
Most of the 10 countries with the lowest levels of birth registration are found in sub-Saharan Africa

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, in the 10 countries with the lowest birth registration levels worldwide

- Somalia: 3%
- Liberia: 4%
- Ethiopia: 7%
- Zambia: 14%
- United Republic of Tanzania: 16%
- Chad: 16%
- Yemen: 17%
- Guinea-Bissau: 24%
- Pakistan: 27%
- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 28%

Among the 10 countries with the largest numbers of unregistered children, India has the most, by a wide margin

Number of children under age five whose births are not registered in the 10 countries with the largest numbers of unregistered children

- India: 71 million
- Nigeria: 17 million
- Pakistan: 16 million
- Ethiopia: 13 million
- Bangladesh: 10 million
- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 8 million
- Indonesia: 8 million
- United Republic of Tanzania: 7 million
- Uganda: 5 million
- Afghanistan: 3 million
A country can achieve a high birth registration rate even with low per capita income.
Many children whose births are recorded lack proof of registration.

Percentage distribution of children under age five whose births are registered, by whether or not they have a birth certificate, in selected countries.
Many mothers lack knowledge of how to register a child’s birth
The children left behind
No significant differences are found in birth registration rates between boys and girls.

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by sex and region.
Gender parity in birth registration appears to be the norm in almost all countries

*Ratio of children under age five whose births are registered, by sex (boys over girls)*

Notes: Each dot represents a country. A ratio of 1.0 (0.95-1.04, grey band) indicates that birth registration levels in the two groups (boys/girls) are equal. Countries with very low prevalence levels have been excluded since data bear some level of uncertainty that would affect the significance of the ratio.

Sources: UNICEF global databases, 2013. Based on DHS, MICS, other national household surveys and vital registration systems, 2000-2012.
Ethnicity is associated with different birth registration rates in some countries

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by ethnicity in selected countries.
Birth registration is higher in urban than in rural areas in almost every region

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by place of residence and region
In some countries, children living in urban areas are up to six times more likely to be registered.

Ratio of children under age five whose births are registered, by place of residence (urban over rural).

Notes: Each triangle represents a country. A ratio of 1.0 (0.95-1.04, grey band) indicates that birth registration levels in the two groups (children from urban/rural areas) are equal. Countries with very low prevalence levels have been excluded since data bear some level of uncertainty that would affect the significance of the ratio.

Sources: UNICEF global databases, 2013. Based on DHS, MICS, other national household surveys and vital registration systems, 2000-2012.
National birth registration prevalence may hide geographic disparities

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered and the geographic area with the highest and lowest level of birth registration, in selected countries

Birth registration rate at the national level (dot) and intra-country variation in birth registration rates by area of residence (line)

Note: Data for Namibia refer to the percentage of children under age five with a birth certificate.
Sources: UNICEF global databases, 2013. Based on DHS, MICS, other national household surveys and censuses, 2005-2012
Children from the richest households are more than twice as likely to be registered as children from the poorest households

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by household wealth quintile and by region

- Richest quintile
- Fourth quintile
- Middle quintile
- Second quintile
- Poorest quintile

Regions:
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- West and Central Africa
- Eastern and Southern Africa
- Middle East and North Africa
- CEE/CIS
- Least developed countries
- World
In most countries, a family’s wealth is correlated with higher birth registration rates

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by household wealth quintile

Notes: Each dot represents a country.
Progress and prospects
Some progress, albeit small, has been achieved in raising birth registration levels since 2000

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Around 2000</th>
<th>Around 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>West and Central Africa</td>
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<td>Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEE/CIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Least developed countries</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brazil is improving its national birth registration rate while closing regional gaps

Percentage of births registered in Brazil, by region

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), Estatísticas do Registro Civil, 2000-2011.
Birth registration levels in Côte d’Ivoire are recovering from the effects of a decade-long crisis

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered in Côte d’Ivoire, by region

Notes: In order to allow for comparability data from MICS2 (2000) and MICS3 (2005-2006) on birth registration were recalculated according to the MICS4 (2009-2011) indicator definition. Therefore, the recalculated data in this figure and in the text may differ from estimates included in MICS2 and MICS3 national reports.

South Africa has seen a steady increase in birth registration over two decades

Percentage of births registered in South Africa

Note: Figures for South Africa presented in this chart include late registrations.
Thanks!