

**UNICEF PROGRESS REPORT TO
Italian Agency for Development Cooperation**

**Strengthening the Civil Registration System for
Children's Right to Identity**



© UNICEF Ethiopia/2016/Mulugeta Ayene

**Submitted By
UNICEF Ethiopia**

June 2017

unicef  | for every child

Table of Contents

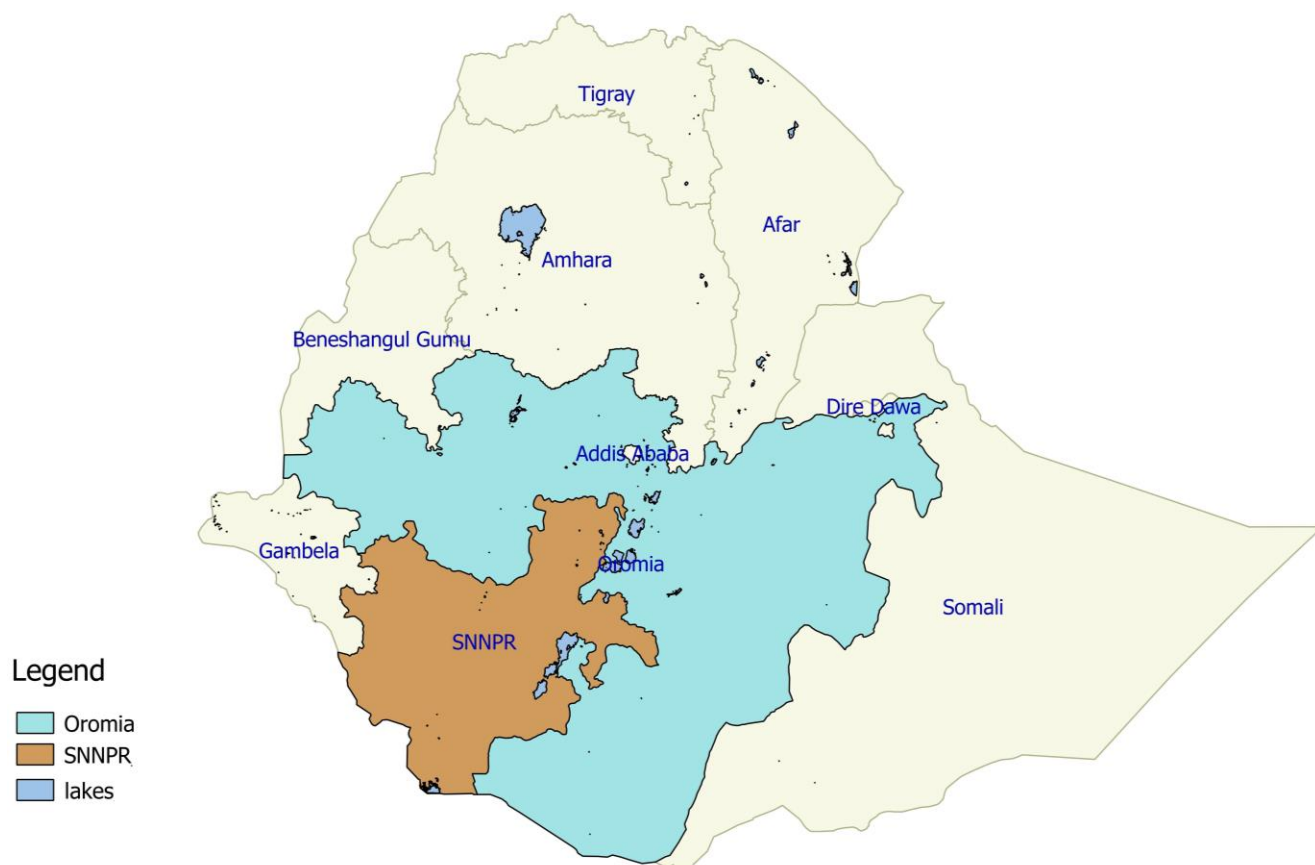
List of Acronyms	2
Map of Ethiopia	3
1. Programme Summary	4
2. Executive Summary	5
3. Purpose	6
4. Results	6
4.1. Main results achieved	6
4.2. Specific project activities and results achieved	7
4.3. Challenges and lessons learned	11
4.4. Monitoring and evaluation	12
4.5. Key partnerships and inter-agency collaboration	12
5. Future Workplan.....	12
6. Financial implementation	13
7. Expression of Thanks.....	14
Donor Report Feedback Form	15

List of Acronyms

AWPs	Annual Work Plans
BoFEC	Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation
BoH	Bureau of Health
BoJ	Bureau of Justice
BoLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
BoWCA	Bureau of Women and Children Affairs
BR	Birth Registration
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
C4D	Communications for Development
EFY	Ethiopian Fiscal Year
FVERA	Federal Vital Events Registration Agency
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
HEWs	Health Extension Workers
IEC	Information and Communication Technology
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
RVERA	Regional Vital Events Registration Agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
ToT	Training of Trainers
VER	Vital Events Registration

Map of Ethiopia

SNNPR and Oromia Administrative Zones



1. Programme Summary

Project Name	Project to Strengthen the Civil Registration System for the Children's Right to Identity: "Identification for Development" (ID)
Country	Ethiopia
Donor	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
Grant Reference	SC160611
Total Contribution	EUR 500,000.00 US\$ 530,785.56
Funds received to date	EUR 500,000.00 US\$ 530,785.56
Funds utilized to date	US\$ 165,125.59 (US\$78,378.54 as expenditure and US\$86,747.05 as commitment)
Unspent balance	US\$ 365,659.95 (excluding the commitment US\$86,747.05)
Duration of grant	07 December 2016 - 06 December 2017
Report Type	Biannual Report
Reporting Period	07 December 2016 - 30 June 2017
Report due date	30 December 2017
Report prepared in	June 2017
UNICEF Strategic Plan and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets	Strategic Plan Outcome 6: Child Protection Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Target 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions Specific target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.
UNICEF Outcome and Output	Outcome: By 2020, an increased number of children and adolescents who are susceptible to violence, exploitation and abuse, in emergency and non-emergency settings, benefit from quality, gender-sensitive, community-based and formal child protection and response services Output: By 2020 50 per cent of woredas provide civil registration service and deliver birth registration and certification services
Geographic focus area	Regions: Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), and Oromia
Focus Population	Estimated 1,004,400 newborn children in 50 per cent of the woredas and kebeles (220 woredas and 5580 kebeles) of Oromia and SNNPR.
Programme Partners	Oromia and SNNPR Regional Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA)
UNICEF Contact	Shalini Bahuguna, Deputy Representative Email: sbahunguna@unicef.org Karin Heissler, Chief of Child Protection Email: kheissler@unicef.org , tel. + 251 115 184223 Mona Mohammed Ahmed, Reports Specialist Email: mmohamedahmed@unicef.org

2. Executive Summary

Birth registration is the first step towards a child's lifelong protection. Therefore, the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has launched a permanent, compulsory and universal registration and certification system for vital events such as birth, death, marriage and divorce on 6 August 2016. UNICEF's investments through the project to *Strengthen the Civil Registration System for the Children's Right to Identity: "Identification for Development" (ID)* is supporting the GoE in its efforts to realize the national civil registration programme in the regions of SNNPR and Oromia. Since the start of the project in December 2016, steady progress has been made in improving the standard and coverage of the vital events registration system in SNNP and Oromia regions.

Despite such progress, the two Vital Events Registration Agencies (VERAs) in SNNP and Oromia regions face a number of challenges, impeding efforts to improve the standard and effectiveness of the current Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system. Some of these include: limited technical capacity of vital events registration organs and personnel, limited interventions to create demand for registration services, and poor infrastructure at kebele level to support registration services.

In response to the above challenges, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation provided UNICEF EUR 500,000 to address the gaps in the technical and institutional capacity of regional vital events registration agencies (RVERAs) and its decentralised structures to improve the delivery of standardised civil registration services. In partnership with the Federal Vital Events Registration Agency (FVERA), and RVERAs of SNNP and Oromia regions, the project has yielded significant results in relevant domains of the programme. Key achievements recorded during the reporting period include:

- A total of 300 (258 men, 42 women) newly assigned registrars (kebele managers) in SNNPR had their capacities enhanced in civil registration, including the following topics: civil registration work flow, concepts and principles, the legal framework and data capturing and archiving. An assessment conducted before and after the training confirmed that significant progress in knowledge and skill development had been made among the training participants.
- An assessment of office logistical requirements was conducted in SNNPR covering a total of 210 kebeles. Based on the findings of the assessment, 210 civil registration offices (at kebele level) have been supplied with secure filing cabinets. This has allowed the registration centres to keep more than 25,200 vital events records in a safe and secure system.
- As part of the initiative to strengthen the administrative data management system at regional and woreda level, desktop computers and printers have been procured and one of each have been delivered to 35 project target woredas. The development of standardised data capturing tools and training of experts in data entry, analysis and reporting is expected to be finalized in the first quarter of the 2010 Ethiopian Fiscal Year (EFY).

- In SNNPR, interventions aimed at improving community's awareness on CRVS have been carried out using diverse communication platforms, including print and electronic media and community conversation/conferences.

The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation has generously contributed a total of EUR 500,000.00 (US\$ 530,785.56) to support the achievement of the project results. As of 22 June 2017, a total of US\$ 165,125.59 (US\$78,378.54 as expenditure and US\$ 86,747.05 as commitment) was utilised leaving a programmable balance of US\$ 365,659.95 (excluding the commitment US\$86,747.05).

3. Purpose

Registering a child's birth is a critical first step towards safeguarding lifelong protection. (...) The impact of the lack of a birth certificate on the individual is becoming ever more evident in the modern world, as identification is required to access an increasingly wide range of services, entitlements and opportunities.¹

Given that Ethiopia, with only seven per cent of the births registered, has one of the lowest levels of birth registration worldwide. This project aims to contribute to the realisation of children's rights to birth registration in SNNP and Oromia region which, together, account for more than 50 per cent of the Ethiopian population.

Birth registration is part of the Ethiopian national civil registration programme which is a key component of UNICEF's strategic investment to support the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) in strengthening the registration of vital events. The launch of the nationwide conventional *National Vital Events Registration System* in August 2016 shows the commitment of the GoE.

The project builds on existing interventions and is part of the continued support to the Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) 2016-2020, which has set a national target of 50 per cent of birth registration coverage by 2020. As reflected in the GoE-UNICEF Country Program Document (CPD) 2016-2020, the Birth Registration (Civil Registration) programme has become a fully-fledged programme and is being implemented nationally. At global level, the programme will contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), target 16.9, which envisages the provision of legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030.

4. Results

4.1. Main Results Achieved

With the help of this project, SNNPR and Oromia have made important strides to improve the standard and geographic coverage of the civil registration system which includes vital events such as birth, death, marriage and divorce.

¹ United Nations Children's Fund (2013). A Passport to Protection; A guide to birth registration programming. NY: UNICEF, p.6

Building on the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) strategy and costed plan that is developed under the auspices of FVERA, progress has been made in the areas of: strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of civil registration centres and officials, improving community awareness on civil registration services, and strengthening coordination, monitoring and supportive supervision. According to administrative data² of the RVERAs of SNNPR and Oromia, the number of births registered between January and May 2017 is 38,132 in SNNPR and 67,350 in Oromia. Compared to the total number of births in the two regions during the same period, (368,097 in SNNPR and 550,927 in Oromia region) the birth registration rate reached 10.3 per cent and 12.2 per cent for SNNPR and Oromia regions respectively.³

The table below shows the total number of births in SNNPR and Oromia as well as the total number of births registered during the period between January and May 2017. It also indicates whether births were registered on time (within 90 days after birth) or late (above 90 days after birth, but less than a year later).

Region	Total # of births	Total # of births registered	Type/ timeliness of registered births			Registration rate (%)
			On time (less than 90 days)	Delayed/ late (more than 90 days, but less than 1 year)	Backlog (over 1 year)	
SNNPR	368,097	38,132	27,760 (73%)	5,033 (13%)	5,339 (14%)	10.3
Oromia	550,927	67,350	23,494 (35%)	43,856 (65%)	0	12.2

4.2. Specific Project Activities and Results Achieved

This project focuses on 5 outputs related to (1) institutional and technical capacity development, (2) establishment of an information management system, (3) knowledge generation and awareness raising, (4) inter-sectoral collaboration, and (5) evidence generation. The key results will be elaborated below.

Output (1): Improved institutional and technical capacity of RVERAs in Oromia and SNNPR to effectively lead and coordinate the registration of vital events

1.1. Training of Trainers (ToT) and roll out trainings

The project funds were used to train 300 newly assigned registrars⁴ in SNNPR of which 42 were women. The training organised by RVERA focused on topics tailored to the roles and responsibilities of participants, covering issues such as civil registration work flow, concepts and principles, legal framework, i.e. the Proclamation on Vital Events Registration and Regulation on Establishment of Vital Events Registration Agency (2012), and data capturing

² Registration data is transferred on a monthly basis from kebele to higher level structures, i.e. woreda, zone, region, federal. The data is consolidated and analysed at regional and federal level, and to some extent at woreda level.

³ Administrative data management system of SNNPR and Oromia RVERA, May 2017.

⁴ The registrars are usually the kebele managers.

and archiving. The training also covered the content of relevant registration instruments, i.e. registers, directive and certificates that are applicable to registrations of births and other vital events as well as types of information to be captured in the registration instruments, e.g. characteristics of the child, the parents, informants of the event, particulars of the registration office. The trainees were selected from 300 kebeles which had not yet commenced registration services due to the absence of trained registrars. After the training, it was reported by the SNNPR RVERA that all the 300 kebeles/registration centres have started the delivery of registration services.

In order to assess the knowledge and skill development among the target civil registrars (trainees), the RVERA in SNNPR administered an assessment on knowledge generation. Participants were assessed against ten questions which focused on key concepts and processes of civil registration stipulated in the *VERA Regulation and Registration Guideline*. The assessment showed that participants scored on average 8 out of 10 possible points. A similar assessment was undertaken to find out how participants' skills have improved over time. The findings showed that participants' skills have significantly improved in the areas of accuracy, coding, completeness of information captured, data validity and relevance. However, it was indicated that further support and guidance is required on issues such as illegibility of handwriting, and date formatting.

The same activities that are implemented in SNNPR are planned to take place in Oromia in the first two quarters of the 2010 EFY.



Civil registrars training at Wolaita Sodo town, SNNPR, 2017, Photo credit: RVERA SNNPR

1.2. Assessment of office logistic needs and procure/supply basic office equipment and furniture

The RVERA of SNNPR with the support of UNICEF undertook an assessment of office logistics requirements of local registration units, covering 210 project target kebeles. The objective of the assessment is to identify and prioritise the needs of local civil registration

offices to establish or improve birth registration structures of each local unit. Based on a checklist developed by RVERA, the target civil registration centres identified priority needs, which further informed the development of a procurement plan. Accordingly, out of 210 offices, 148 (70.47 per cent) of the local offices ranked the 'absence of safe filing cabinet' as their number one priority. A field mission conducted by RVERA's assessment team during the third quarter of EFY 2009 (February-March 2017), has further confirmed existence of a significant gap in storage arrangements for vital events records and maintenance of their physical integrity and security. Based on the findings of the assessment, 90 per cent of the targeted registration centres had unsafe data storage arrangements.



Data archiving and storage arrangements depicted by the assessment Photo credit: RVERA SNNPR/2017

Based on the findings of the logistics need assessment, 210 civil registration offices were supplied with secure filing cabinets that can all together store more than 25,200 vital events records in a safe and secure system.



Secure filing cabinet procured by project funds, used by civil registration centre Photo credit: RVERA SNNPR/2017

Output (2): Established digital data/information management system on CRVS

Project investments towards the establishment of a CRVS information management system are being made. At the same time, FVERA is undertaking the preparatory work to develop and operationalise a standardised CRVS digital information management system across the country. In the context of this recent national initiative, and to avoid potential duplication of efforts and resources, project support is tailored to strengthen the administrative data management system of RVERAs and lower level structures. Accordingly, interventions are geared towards building the technical and infrastructural capacity of RVERAs for systematic capturing, analysis and reporting of civil registration data. Based on the identified needs, desktop computers and printers have been procured and delivered to 35 project target woredas. Future plans include: the development of standardised data capturing tools, provision of training on data entry, and training of experts on analysis and reporting.

Output (3): Improved knowledge of the importance and benefits of birth registration in selected kebeles

UNICEF provided financial and technical assistance to the RVERAs to undertake awareness raising and community mobilization activities. The RVERA in SNNPR has developed a communication strategy to guide the implementation of community awareness raising and mobilization interventions. Specific messages were developed and disseminated focusing on the importance and the compulsory nature of registration of vital events (birth, death, marriage and divorce). Regional and local radio and FM stations were used as communication channels to disseminate the messages. Public conferences were organised in 85 kebeles to create awareness of vital events registration in general and birth registration in particular. About 20,000 head of households participated in the conferences carried out in the aforementioned kebeles based in 39 woredas. In order to assess the prevailing knowledge and attitude of the community on civil registration services, RVERA is undertaking a knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) assessment in the target locations. The assessment is expected to be completed by August 2017.

Output (4): Improved inter-sectoral collaboration, monitoring and supportive supervision for delivery of standardized CRVS program

An important development in the area of inter-sectoral collaboration is the formation of a multi-sectoral coordination body supporting and overseeing the implementation of the CRVS work in the two regions. The following most relevant sectoral bureaus are members of the coordination and oversight mechanism: RVERA, Bureau of Justice (BoJ), Bureau of Women and Children Affairs (BoWCA), Bureau of Education (BoE), Bureau of Health (BoH), Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA), and the Regional Police Commission.

In order to strengthen the interoperability of birth registration and health services, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed in both regions by representatives of the two sectors to lay out the governance of interoperability. In addition, technical assistance is being provided to foster understanding of the importance of integrating birth

registration in health services. This means that birth notifications are expected to be reported more effectively to the civil registration centres.

See more on 'monitoring' under section 4.4 of the report.

Output (5): Generated evidence on the effectiveness of CRVS intervention and results

The project output envisages to undertake a rapid assessment to evaluate the success of the project interventions, and to document and disseminate lessons learned at the end of the project period. For this reason, the activities are planned to be carried out in the fourth quarter of 2017.

4.3. Challenges and Lessons Learned

The declaration of the state of emergency in October 2016 by the GoE following the unrest in the countryside, particularly in Oromia Region, had a negative impact on timely implementation of the project interventions as well as delivery of civil registration services. For this reason, the progress and achievement of results is significantly constrained. In order to find a remedy for the situation, UNICEF and the regional VERA have developed a plan to implement project interventions in the region within the first two quarters of the EFY 2010 (AWP). Initially, this was planned to be implemented in the four quarters, i.e. last two quarters of EFY 2009 and first two quarters of 2010.

Moreover, RVERAs of SNNPR and Oromia reported a number of challenges for implementing the civil registration system in their respective regions. Below is a list of these challenges and a description of how UNICEF is addressing them:

- Resource constraints led to inadequate preparedness of registration centres in terms of human resources, supplies and logistics including office space, office supplies, transportation and secure spaces for archiving and data storage at kebele level. There are even kebeles without managers (registrars) and offices in both regions. In Oromia, out of the expected 7,209 registration centres 2,110 are non-functional. In SNNPR, out of the 4,202 kebele level civil registration structures 658 are non-functional.
UNICEF together with development partners is advocating to leverage resources for infrastructure and human resources.
- Significant limitations in notifying births and deaths occurring in health facilities. The practice of the health sector in the notification of birth by issuing notification papers is negligible, which is highly affecting the standard and coverage of birth registration. *To improve effectiveness of interoperability between CRVS and the health sector, UNICEF is carrying out a number of activities including lobbying with senior officials of the two sectors for improved consultation and collaboration to identify bottlenecks. In addition, UNICEF is supporting the printing of birth notification forms and training of personnel.*

- Shortage of vehicles to undertake regular supportive supervision and monitoring at woreda and kebele level.
As UNICEF funds are not being used for the procurement of cars, UNICEF will advocate with other partners to address this challenge.
- Limited demand creation interventions among communities for registration services and technical capacity building trainings for designated personnel and community groups due to the scale of support required and resource constraints.
Guided by a communication strategy, UNICEF's efforts towards improving the awareness of the community using diverse communication tools and messages tailored to the needs of members of the community are ongoing.

4.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to make the monitoring more systematic, joint government and UNICEF monitoring and supportive supervision have been undertaken on a regular basis. The monitoring and supportive supervision interventions are guided by a monitoring checklist (see Annex 1). The findings of monitoring visits have informed discussions on the identification of bottlenecks and provision of remedial measures at the level of UNICEF and the implementing partner-VERA. UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance for a joint consultation in Hawassa on 16 March 2017. The consultation was attended by relevant bureaus at regional level, as well as representatives of VERA structures from 15 zonal and 'special' woredas, and 130 towns and woredas. During the joint consultation, stakeholders elaborated on the findings of the assessment/monitoring including progress made in the area of building the civil registration system and remaining bottlenecks and remedial actions. Furthermore, UNICEF is using its field offices to undertake regular monitoring and supportive supervision to the project target woredas to strengthen the quality of interventions and monitor results at output and outcome level.

4.5. Key Partnerships and Inter-Agency Collaboration

The national civil registration programme is coordinated and implemented by FVERA, with support from federal and regional government organisations and development partners (UN agencies, World Bank, Italian Cooperation, etc). At regional level, the VERAs of Oromia and SNNPR are responsible for the program implementation and oversight. The partnership is guided by annual work plans agreed with both federal and regional implementing partners. UNICEF's support to the programme contributes to the outcomes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which includes relevant United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as strategic partners in Ethiopia's vital events registration system reform efforts.

5. Future Workplan

The project aims to systematically address some of the gaps manifested in the civil registration system of the two project regions and further mitigate the aforementioned

challenges towards improved achievement of project results. The next steps for the implementation of the project are:

- Provide technical assistance to improve interoperability of the health and CRVS systems for improved notification of births occurring in health facilities at different levels. This is expected to enhance the coverage and quality of registration services by developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and providing training of trainers (ToT) for health personnel.
- Assess the results of technical capacity building and based on this further strengthen the capacity building of civil registrars and health workers for complete coverage of the project target locations. This may include trainings, mentorship and peer learning.
- Provide technical assistance to RVERAs to improve tracking and reporting of results on birth registration at output and outcome level.
- Strengthen coordination, monitoring and supportive supervision to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of the project.
- Procure and supply basic office equipment and furniture to vital events registration offices based on the outcome of assessments.
- Conduct community awareness creation interventions informed by the Communication for Development (C4D) strategy.
- Conduct a rapid assessment on the achievement of project results.
- Organize a workshop on project lessons learned.

Adjustments in strategies, targets or outcomes and outputs:

- After consultation with the RVERA of the two project target regions, activity number 1.2 (printing and distribution of birth registration books and certificates) has been reprogrammed due to commitments of the regional governments to cover the specific cost through internal resources. For this reason, the budget initially earmarked for this activity is reprogrammed to address deficits identified mainly under output 1 "Improved institutional and technical capacity of RVERAs in Oromia and SNNPR to effectively lead and coordinate the registration of vital events".
- The project document envisages making birth registration services available to a total of 1,004,400 new born children (a birth rate of 15 newborn children per kebele per month for both regions, in 12 months period, and covering all target kebeles). Nevertheless, it is found imperative to further define the number/percentage of births registered out of the total of births during the period. Accordingly, in consultation with government implementing partners and aligned to the registration targets set by the two regional governments, a birth registration rate of 20 per cent is proposed.

6. Financial Implementation

Please see attached the Donor Statement by Activity.

7. Expression of thanks

UNICEF seizes this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation for the contributions of Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. Thousands of children have benefitted and many more stand to benefit from your generous support to UNICEF-assisted programmes in SNNP and Oromia regions. On behalf of the entire UNICEF team, we thank you once again for your generous support to the realization of our commitments to protecting the rights and improving the well-being of children and women in Ethiopia.

Donor Report Feedback Form

UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback. Kindly answer the questions below for the above-mentioned report and return to the Public Sector Alliances and Resource Mobilization Office (PARMO) who will share your input with relevant colleagues in the field and in headquarters. Thank you!

Please return the completed form back to UNICEF by email to:

Name: Mona Mohammed Ahmed

Email: mmohamedahmed@unicef.org

**SCORING: 5 indicates "highest level of satisfaction" while
0 indicates "complete dissatisfaction"**

1. To what extent did the narrative content of the report conform to your reporting expectations? (For example, the overall analysis and identification of challenges and solutions)

5

4

3

2

1

0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what did we miss or what could we do better next time?

2. To what extent did the fund utilization part of the report meet your reporting expectations?

5

4

3

2

1

0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what did we miss or what could we do better next time?

3. To what extent does the report meet your expectations in regard to the analysis provided, including identification of difficulties and shortcomings as well as remedies to these?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what could we do better next time?

4. To what extent does the report meet your expectations with regard to reporting on results?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what did we miss or what could we do better next time?

5. Please provide us with your suggestions on how this report could be improved to meet your expectations.

6. Are there any other comments that you would like to share with us?

unicef  | for every child