



**The health information system is the backbone of the health system. It includes a range of population-based and health facility-based data sources.** Kabul, 15 September 2013 – The Ministry of Public Health, the Central Statistics Organization (CSO), and the Civil Registration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, with technical and financial support from WHO, jointly initiated a comprehensive assessment of civil registration and vital statistics system in Afghanistan.

In the augural session of the assessment, Mr Mowahed, Deputy President of the CSO, emphasized the importance of civil registration and vital statistics in the political process, planning and economic development of the country. Dr Richard Peeperkorn, WHO Representative for Afghanistan, said, “Civil registration and vital statistics are a basic but crucial element of the information system. It involves a wide range of stakeholders”.

He further added, while comprehensive civil registration and vital statistics systems require long-term commitment and stewardship by governments, tackling some fundamental weakness and inefficiencies in the existing systems can result in substantial improvements in a relatively short period of time. This is now the right moment for Afghanistan to move forward to undertake in-depth reviews, diagnose critical weaknesses to be addressed, and develop national action plans for the enhancement of the civil registration and vital statistics system. Health systems information and evidence, is and will remain to be a priority area for WHO, and we will continue to support this key area of the health system.

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