



Inequities in birth registration

Nadya Kassam
Child Protection Section, UNICEF

Outline

- What is birth registration, why do it?
- Protection concerns
- Identifying gender issues and barriers
- Working on the solutions

What is birth registration?

Birth registration is the CONTINUOUS, PERMANENT and UNIVERSAL recording, within the civil registry, of the occurrence and characteristics of births in accordance with the legal requirements of a country.

Why do we register children?

“The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.”

Article 7 (1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Childhood protection concerns

- Less access to health
- Less access to school
- Child marriage
- Child soldiers



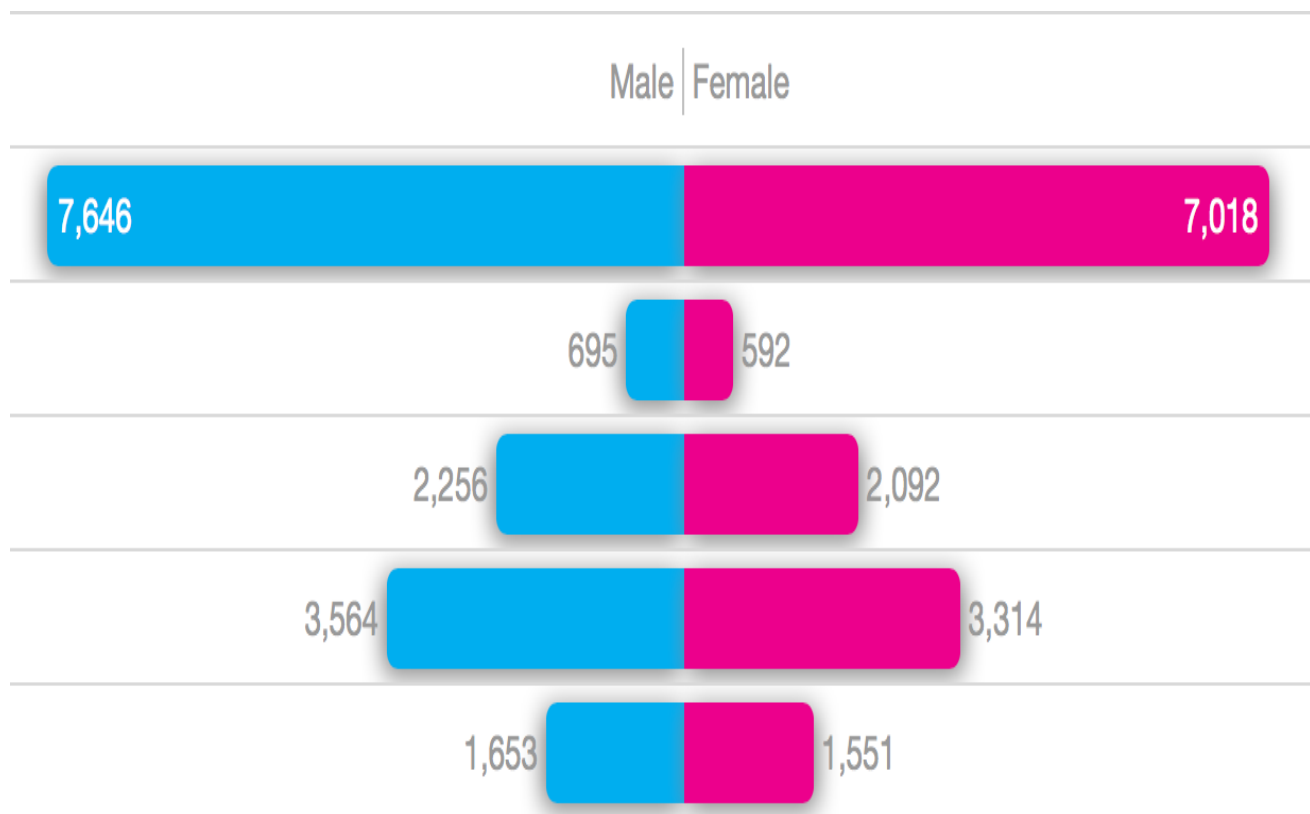
© UNICEF/NYHQ2007-2287/Roger LeMoyne

Further concerns...

- Welfare grants
- Sitting exams
- Access to juvenile justice
- Obtaining passport, national ID
- Inheritance
- Voting

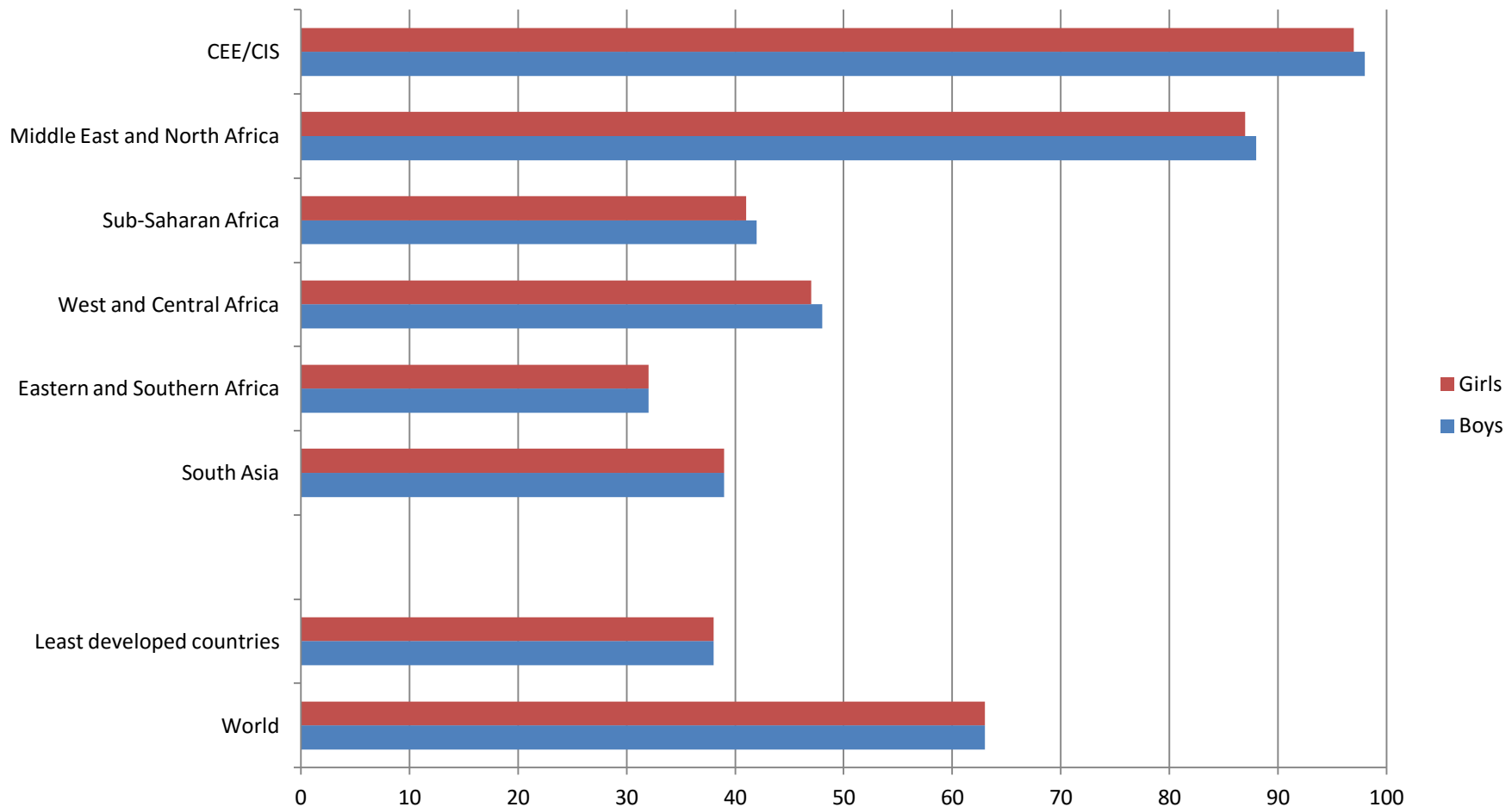
Sex ratios of birth notifications/ registrations

52.6% for boys 47.4% for girls



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

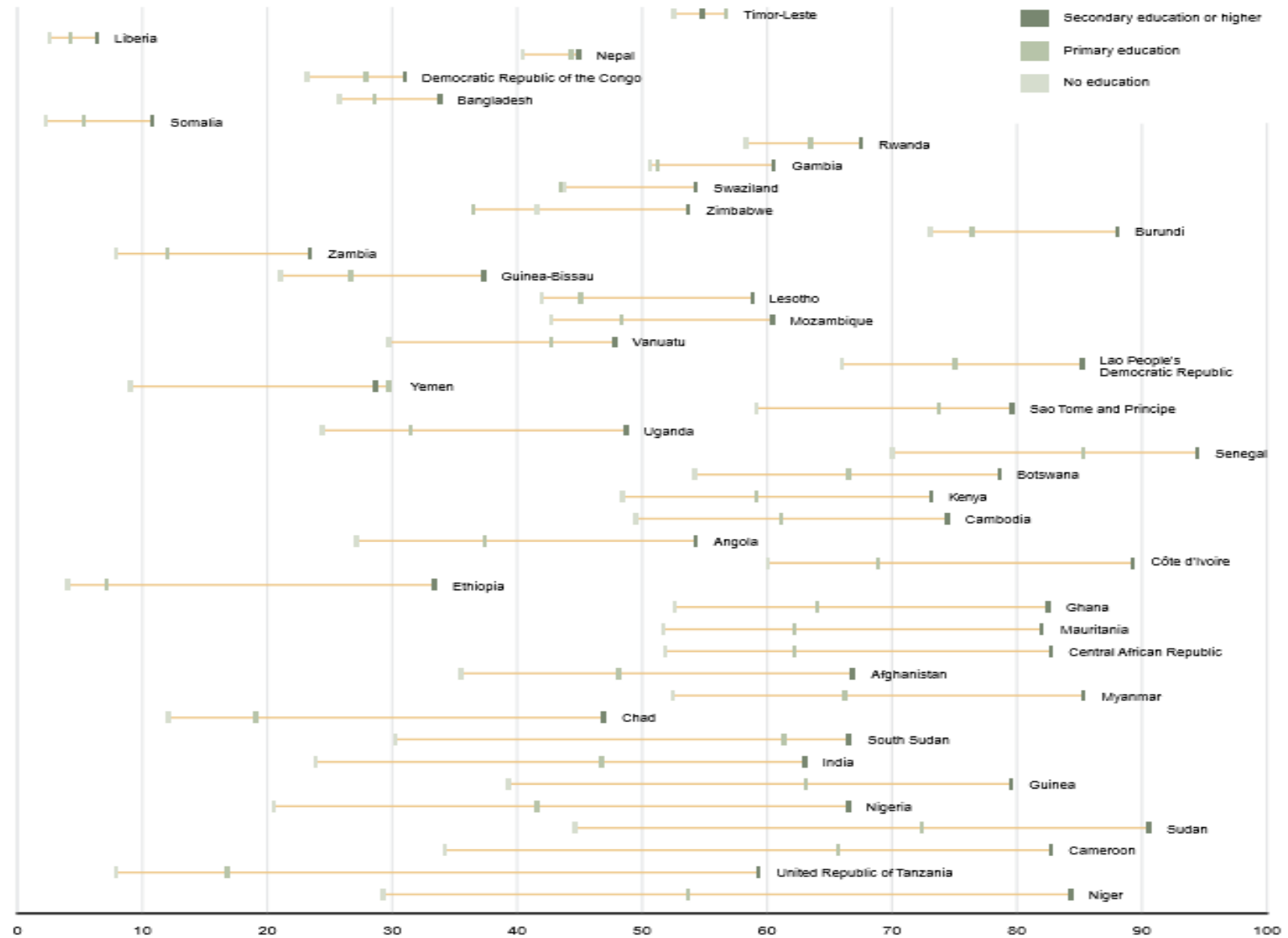


Notes: Estimates are based on a subset of 145 countries covering 73 per cent of the global population of male children under age five and 74 per cent of the global population of female children under age five. Regional estimates represent data from countries covering at least half of the regional population. Data coverage was insufficient to calculate regional estimates by sex for East Asia and the Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Sources: UNICEF global databases, 2013, based on DHS, MICS, other national household surveys, censuses and vital registration systems, 2005-2012.

Children of mothers with some level of education are more likely to be registered

Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, by mother's level of education in countries with birth registration levels equal to or below 75 per cent



Note: Data for Liberia and Yemen refer to the percentage of children under age five with a birth certificate.
Sources: UNICEF global databases, 2013. Based on DHS, MICS and other national household surveys, 2001-2012.

General gender impacts

Women's and girls'
lack of safety and
mobility

Women's and girls'
lack of resources
and decision
making

Limited access to
knowledge,
information and
technology for
women and girls

Excessive time
burden and dual
responsibilities for
women and girls

Masculine and
feminine ideals and
expectations

Specific barriers include:

- The law may:
 - need both parents' signature at time of registration
 - require fathers to be present at registration
 - not allow unmarried mothers to register their children
 - limit the time in which free registration may occur

Social norms

- Registrars may be male, harder to approach, impose (illegal) fees
- Registration can be misunderstood as notification
- Correlation between educated mothers and registered children

Possible solutions

- Change the law to make registration free and not discriminate against mothers
- Increase registry capacity
- Simplify the process for ease and timeliness
- Public awareness on the importance of it
- How to complete the process efficiently
- Facilities to be prepared – eg health centres

The future...with caution

- Big change in attitude eg SDGs
- Parallel systems may be an issue
- Future challenges are now

Merci beaucoup

UN DROIT DE CHAQUE ENFANT À
SA NAISSANCE Inégalités et
tendances dans l'enregistrement
des naissances