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Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa, ISibalo House, Koch Street, Salvokop, Pretoria, 0002  
www.statssa.gov.za, info@statssa.gov.za, Tel +27 12 310 8911

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Recorded live births, 2020

#### *South Africa records almost 35 000 teenage mothers in 2020*

A total of 1 003 307 births were registered in South Africa in 2020. Of these, 899 303 (89,6%) were births that occurred and were registered in 2020 (current birth registrations), while 104 004 (10,4%) were births that occurred in the previous years but were registered in 2020. A total of 899 303 children were born in 2020. There were 453 165 males and 446 138 female births.

Of note were the number of teenage mothers. A total of 33 899 births occurred to mothers aged 17 years and younger. Over 600 children aged 10-13 years (including late birth registrations) gave birth, of these, 499 gave birth in 2020. Early pregnancy and motherhood creates a greater risk in terms of maternal complications resulting in low survival rates of babies and forces many girls to prematurely take on adult role which they are not emotionally or physically prepared for.

The Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act (Act No. 18 of 2010), stipulates that all births must be registered within 30 days from date of occurrence. The data in 2020, show a slowdown in registrations within the first 30 days for months of April, October and November coinciding with lockdown measures instituted by government to stem the rising COVID-19 pandemic cases during 2020. However overall, 80,0 % of births that occurred in 2020 were registered within 30 days from date of occurrence. Provincially, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape saw the highest decline in the proportion registered outside the legal mandate with only 64% and 67,4% births registered within 30 days of occurrence, respectively. This is according to the latest Recorded live births, 2020 statistical report released by Statistics South Africa today.



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Statistieke Suid-Afrika • Dipalopalo tša Afrika Borwa • Telubalo taseNingizimu Afrika • EzeeNkcukacha maNani zoMzantsi Afrika • Iimbalobalo zeSewula Afrika

The South Africa I know, the home I understand



Information about fathers remain the biggest challenge. In 2020, no reliable information on fathers could be provided due to a high proportion of births registered (more than 60%) without details of fathers. Section 10 of the births and deaths acts prohibits unmarried fathers to have their information on the birth certificate of a child which contributes to the high number of births with no information on fathers. This is expected to change in the coming years as in September 2021 the Constitutional Court ruled that this section of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act is unconstitutional. This means unmarried fathers can now have their information registered in the birth certificate of their children at the Department of Home Affairs.

Information on the number of live births is crucial for the measurement of changes in population size and composition as every country needs to know its characteristics at every administrative level, from national to the lowest geographic level. Unregistered children become invisible when important evidence-based public health policies as well as other social development initiatives are made.

The full reports are available on the Statistics South Africa website: [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za)

***Ends***

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**For media enquiries contact:**

Felicia Sithole

Media Relations

Cell: 076 340 0693

Email: [Felicias@statssa.gov.za](mailto:Felicias@statssa.gov.za)