



**ACERWC**  
African Committee of Experts on  
the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Comité Africain d'Experts sur les  
Droits et le Bien-être de l'Enfant

Comitê Africano dos Direitos e  
Bem-Estar da Crianças

اللجنة الأفريقية المعنية بحقوق الطفل ورفاهه

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## **Communique on the 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**

1. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child finalized its 37th Ordinary Session, which was held virtually on 15-26 March 2021.
2. The Session was attended by Members of the ACERWC, Commissioner of Social Affairs, Representatives of children, Member States, AU Organs, Network of National Human Rights Institutions UN Agencies, International Organisations and CSOs.
3. During the Opening Ceremony of the Session, remarks were made by children's representative, Nour Elhouda, Representative of the CSO forum, Felistus Motimedi, President of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, Hon Justice Sylvain Oré, Vice Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Commissioner Rémy Ngoy Lumbo, Representative of the Government of Lesotho, H. E. Mantsenki Mphalane, Commissioner of Social Affairs, H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil Mohammed, and Chairperson of the Committee, Hon Joseph Ndayisenga.
4. During the Session, the following activities were undertaken and various decisions were made in line with the mandate of the ACERWC.
5. Five new Members and two Members whose first terms had expired and got re-elected were Sworn in. The Members are:
  - Hon. Wilson Adao
  - Hon. Karoona Chooramum

- Hon. Anne Musiwa
- Hon. Theophane Nikyema
- Hon. Robert Doya Nanima
- Hon. Aver Gavar (re-elected)
- Hon Aboubekrine El Jera (re-elected)

6. The Committee had a farewell ceremony for its outgoing members namely:

- Hon. Benyam Dawit Mezmur
- Hon Marie Christine Bocoum
- Hon. Maria Mapani-Kawimbe
- Hon. Clement Mashamba
- Hon. Nanikie NKWE

7. The Committee organized a Day of General Discussion on the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Adolescent Children. Following the discussions, participants adopted an outcome statement, which highlights the challenges and presents recommendations to Member States of the African Union, the African Union Commission, the ACERWC, and Civil Societies on measures to be undertaken on the gaps identified during the discussions.

8. The Committee considered the first periodic State Party report of the Republic of Guinea and the Initial Report of the Republic of Guinea Bissau where it conducted constructive dialogue with high-level delegations from both countries.

9. The Committee held an implementation hearing on the implementation of its decision on Communication No. 006/Com/002/2015- In the matter between the Institute for Human Right and Development in Africa and Finders Group Initiative on behalf of TFA (a minor) and the Government of Republic of Cameroon, where it heard the views of both parties in the case. Following the hearing, the Committee noted that there is lack of implementation of its decisions and therefore requested the Republic of Cameroon to:

- Provide timeline and roadmap for the implementation of all of its recommendations, mainly the payment of the compensation and the enactment of legislation to eradicate sexual violence;
- Provide evidence on the reported decision of the Court of Appeal and also a timeline for the

court proceeding of the retrial;

- Ensure that the trainings are targeted towards not only on knowledge but also behavior and demeanor of the police and judges while dealing with issues of child protection; and
- Report on the status of the implementation of the decision bi-annually.

10. The Committee considered the CSO complementary report on the periodic report of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in preparation for the State Party report consideration.

11. The Committee considered the admissibility of four Communications and decided as follows;

- Communication N°: 0013/Com/001/2020, APDF and IHRDA on behalf of AS a minor against the Republic of Mali- Declared Admissible;
- Communication N°: 0016/Com/004/2020, African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) on behalf of Ms. Umjumah Osman Mohamed against the Republic of the Sudan- Declared Admissible;
- Communication N°o: 0014/Com/002/2020, Ramphele Attorneys on behalf of Tholodi Tloubatla and Thibedi Tloubatla against the Republic of South Africa- Declared Inadmissible; and
- Communication N°: 0015/Com/003/2020, Taha Fadul, Nisreen Mustafa, Somia Shampaty and Nawras Elfatih on behalf of Abbas Mohamed AL-Nour Musa Al-Emam, Modathir Alrayah Mohamed Badawi and Fadoul Almoula Aljaili Nourallah: Taha Fadul et al against the Republic of the Sudan- The Committee decided for the application to be returned to the Applicants for required amendment and clarity in line with the ACERWC's Revised Guidelines for Consideration of Communications.

12. The Committee decided to postpone the hearing on Communication No: 0012/Com/001/2019, in the matter between Legal and Human Rights Centre and Centre for Reproductive Rights (on behalf of Tanzanian girls) against the United Republic of Tanzania to its upcoming session. Moreover, the Committee granted amicus curie on the same communication to the United Nations Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls after consideration of its application.

13. The Committee considered and adopted as amended the following documents:

- General Comment No.7 on Article 27 of the African Children's Charter on sexual violence against children;
- Model law on children and armed conflict;

- ToR on the establishment of the Working Group on children and armed conflict; and
- Inception report for the study on the impact of Covid-19 on children.

14. The Committee revised its country rapporteurs, special rapporteurs, and Members of its Working Groups. The details of the Rapporteurs and Members of the Working Groups are available on the Committees Website ( [www.acerwc.africa](http://www.acerwc.africa) ).

15. The Committee decided to develop a dissemination strategy for its knowledge products on children and armed conflict and also to launch an annual publication on a selected theme. Accordingly, for the year 2021, the Committee will be publishing a Special Issue on ‘children and terrorism in Africa’.

16. The Committee decided to organize day of general discussion on standardizing the provision of information to children to ensure that information is packaged appropriately for children, and to ensure the safety of children interacting in the social media platform.

17. The Committee decided to develop guidelines on the following themes subject to availability of funding:

- i. Guidelines on safe return of children to school during the COVID-19 pandemic
- ii. Guidelines on the expansion of social protection benefits to children; and
- iii. Guidelines on behavioral change communication for community mobilization, education and parental guidance on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

18. The Committee adopted as amended the report of the 37th Ordinary Session.

19. The Committee decided to hold its 38<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session virtually on 15-26 November 2021.

Done at the 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the ACERWC on 26 March 2021.