
**CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE VALIDATION WORKSHOP OF THE ACERWC'S
CONTINENTAL STUDY ON THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE
RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN AFRICA
3-4 NOVEMBER 2023
Addis Ababa**

I. Background

Climate change is one of the most pressing existential threats confronting humanity, and despite efforts to mitigate the risks, it is wreaking havoc on nature and negatively impacting the lives of billions worldwide.¹ Africa is widely regarded as the continent most vulnerable to and least prepared to deal with climate change, with climate-related risks such as biodiversity loss, land degradation, and deforestation.² Climate change has severe consequences not just for the ecosystem, but also for children, particularly African children, who endure a disproportionate share of its devastating impacts. Extreme weather events, water scarcity, food insecurity, air pollution, and vector-borne and infectious diseases are all consequences of climate change that already have a negative impact on children.³ Their predicament is aggravated by the fact that children in the continent have the fewest resources to respond, and socioeconomic issues such as inequality and poverty limit climate change adaptation ability.⁴

The situation is especially perilous for children disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of children, including girls, children with disabilities, indigenous children, and children on the move, exacerbating the multiple challenges they face.⁵ Climate change has thus been rightfully identified as the greatest threat to the realization of children's rights, with the potential to reverse recent gains and obstruct realization of children's rights as enshrined in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the Charter).⁶

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2022). Climate Change: A threat to human wellbeing and health of the planet. Taking action now can secure our future.

² IPCC (2007). Africa. Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC.

³ OHCHR (2017). Analytical study on the relationship between climate change and the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of the child; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/HRC/37/58), 24 January 2018.

⁴ OHCHR (2019). The Global Climate Crisis: A Child Rights Crisis"; IPCC (2022), "IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. According to UNICEF, 35 of the 45 countries identified in the Children's Climate Risk Index as the most vulnerable to climate change are in Sub-Saharan Africa. In these 35 African countries, approximately 490 million children under the age of 18 are at the highest risk of being affected by climate change. UNICEF (2021). The climate crisis is a child rights crisis:: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index.

⁵ OHCHR (2017).

⁶ OHCHR (2019).

Cognizant of the devastating impacts of climate change on the rights of children in Africa and the need for a child rights-based response to the challenges brought by the impact of climate change, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child decided to establish a Working Group on Children's Rights and Climate Change during its 35th Ordinary Session, held virtually from 31 August to 08 September 2020. The aim of the Working Group is to integrate a child rights-based approach to climate change responses in the continent and to thereby ensure that children's rights and welfare is protected from the impacts of climate change.

As part of its planned activities, the Working Group is developing a Continental Study on the Impacts of Climate Change on the Rights of Children in Africa. The Committee has contracted a team of Consultants to undertake the Study on its behalf under its supervision. The Consultants have finalized data collection and submitted the first draft. The draft was presented to the Committee during its 41st Ordinary Session and various comments were made on the first draft. With a view to collect further comments and inputs from Member States, experts on the field of children's rights and environmental law, and other stakeholders, the Committee is organizing a validation workshop on the draft study. The validation workshop will be attended by representatives of Member States, UN Agencies, academia, International Non-Governmental Organizations, members of the technical working group on the Study, along with the Consultants, Members of the Committee and the Secretariat of the Committee.

II. Objectives of the Validation Workshop

The main objectives of the validation workshop include:

- Assessing the findings and recommendations of the draft study;
- Identifying gaps in the draft study if any;
- Collecting experts opinions on the nexus between climate change and children's rights in Africa to enrich the recommendations of the Study;
- Engaging Member States to gather their opinions on the issue to ensure ownership of the Study which will in effect enhance better implementation of the recommendations;
- Brainstorming on some of the concepts surrounding the subject matter including, intergenerational equity and future generations, adaptation, mitigation, and nature based solutions, and precautionary principle to ensure that the Study provides a practical recommendation that is in line with international instruments as well as that is in line with the lived realities of African children;
- Gathering experience based inputs from various stakeholders to enrich the findings and recommendations of the Committee; and
- Increasing awareness about the ongoing Study to mobilize publicity of the Study in advance.

III. Methodology

The validation will be mainly a consultative forum where stakeholders will be able to provide their opinion, share their expertise and experiences on the issues covered by the Study. The draft Study will also be shared with participants of the validation workshop and further inputs can be made on the document in addition to the issues that will be raised during the validation workshop. The presentations and discussions on the Study will be guided by the Chapters of the Study.

IV. Funding

The validation workshop will be funded by the Committee and GIZ.

V. Time Frame and Venue

The validation workshop will be held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, from 03 to 04 November, 2023, at the African Union Commission's Headquarters.