

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

### APPOINTMENT OF AN EXTERNAL EXPERT FOR WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Term of Office April 2024- November 2025

<b>External Expert (1)</b>
<b>Key Task:</b> Serving in the working group of the ACERWC on Children's Rights and Climate Change, in the fulfilment of the mandates of the Group.
<b>Duty station:</b> Home based with travels to attend meetings of Working Groups, on-site activities of the Working Group and Ordinary Sessions of the Committee.
<b>Contract type and duration:</b> Part-time external expert (1)
<b>Date of appointment:</b> April 2024

#### I. Background

Climate change is one of the most pressing existential threats to human beings. It has been recognised for decades that the climate of the earth is changing at an alarming rate, with devastating consequences for life forms on the planet. The latest reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warn of the current impact of climate change and its worsening trend, with a possible irreversible chain of devastation bound to take place in just a decade unless action is taken to reverse it. Climate change has long been exhibiting its various effects, such as the rise of sea level and associated flooding, reduction in freshwater availability, increase in global warming, desertification, and loss of biodiversity.

Climate change disproportionately impacts least developed and developing countries, which are categories most African countries fall into. This is, among other factors, due to a relatively limited capacity to respond to climate change and a high reliance on land and water resources for survival. Various African countries already face a problem of water scarcity, with millions of children living in areas of high or extremely high water scarcity.

It is further concerning that children are at an even higher level of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change due to their growing bodies and developing minds. According to the WHO, children under 5 years of age bear the highest burden of disease as a result of undernutrition, malaria, and certain types of cancer that affect children which are all exacerbated by climate change and are expected to increase considerably due to global warming.

Climate change has an impact on a number of rights recognised in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC or the Charter); including:

- the best interest of the child,
- survival and development,
- health and welfare and its consequential impact on education,
- protection from harmful practices,
- non-discrimination and protection from violence and abuse,
- protection of children on the move.

Cognisant of the above-mentioned issues 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 (ACERWC or the Committee) decided to establish a Working Group on Children's Rights and Climate Change during its 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session, held virtually from August 31 to September 8, 2020. The Working Group was established in accordance with Article 38(1) of the African Children's Charter which authorises the Committee to establish its own Rules of Procedure, which the ACERWC developed and revised in 2013 and 2015, respectively, and Rule 58 of the Revised Rules of Procedure, which allows the ACERWC to establish special mechanisms, which include working groups, and the assigning of specific tasks or mandates to either an individual member or group of members concerning the preparation of its sessions or the execution of special programs, studies, and projects.

Since its inception, the Working Group has carried out a number of tasks with the objective of discharging its mandate. As part of its mandate in setting standards, the Working Group issued a Resolution to Integrate a Child-Rights Based Approach into Climate Change Action during its 39<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held virtually from 21 March 2022 to 01 April 2022. Additionally, the Working Group issued a Statement on the Africa Day of Food and Nutrition Security on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2022, highlighting the impact of climate change on the right to adequate nutrition for children in Africa. Moreover, the Working Group issued a Statement on June 5, 2023, to commemorate World Environment Day. In accordance with its mandate to investigate the impact of climate change on the

rights and welfare of children in Africa, the Working Group is currently conducting a Continental Study on the Impact of Climate Change on Children's Rights in Africa. Furthermore, the Working Group is in the process of developing a Strategy to Mitigate and Adapt to the Impacts of Climate Change on the Rights of Children in Africa.

Despite these efforts, the Committee notes that the severe impacts of climate change on the rights and welfare of children in Africa remain one of the major challenges to the effective implementation of the rights recognised in the ACRWC. Therefore, sustained effort and coordinated action are required to navigate the complexity of the interrelationship between children's rights and climate change, as well as its impacts on the rights and welfare of children in Africa. In recognition of this and the reality that Member States and other relevant stakeholders continue to grapple with the complexity and urgency of this multifaceted issue, the need to comprehensively address and mitigate the profound effects of climate change on children's rights in Africa is as urgent as ever. In light of this, as well as the ongoing need to diligently complete the tasks outlined in the establishing Resolution, the ACERWC deemed it prudent and necessary to extend the Working Group's mandate for another two years during its 41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session held in Maseru, the Kingdom of Lesotho from April 28 to May 6, 2023.

The aim of the Working Group is to integrate a child rights-based approach to climate change responses on the continent and thereby ensure that children's rights and welfare are protected from the impacts of climate change. The Working Group is composed of four Members of the ACERWC and four external experts who will be recruited in accordance with this TOR.

The Working Group will undertake its activities guided primarily by the African Children's Charter, the Resolution establishing the Working Group and the Standard of Operating Procedures for the establishment of Working Groups as Special Mechanisms within the ACERWC.

## **II. Main duties and responsibilities of external expert**

The external expert, together with the other Members of the Working Group, will be tasked with discharging the mandates of the working group as contained in the Resolution for the establishment of the Working Group and reiterated as follows;

- i. Provide support to the activities of the Working Group on Children's Rights and Climate Change;

- ii. Assist the Working Group in disseminating the findings of the Study on the Impacts of Climate Change on the Rights of Children in Africa;
- iii. Assist the Working Group in developing a strategy to mitigate and adapt the impacts of climate change on the rights of children in Africa, as well as in its dissemination;
- iv. Assist the Working Group in developing guidelines, policies and standards on matters related to the rights of children in the context of climate change;
- v. Undertake extensive research, gather information, and draw experiences from other mechanisms with a related mandate;
- vi. Assist the Working Group engaging with Governments with a view to establishing laws, policies and strategies that protect the rights and welfare of children in the context of climate change, as well as in its efforts to mitigate and adapt to its impacts;
- vii. Contribute to the development of the ACERWC's documents concerning the rights of children in the context of climate change; and
- viii. Assist the Working Group in carrying out various activities to raise awareness and mobilise action on climate change and children's rights among African Union organs, Regional Economic Communities, National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, child and youth-led organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.

### III. Qualifications

- i. Advanced university degree in law, human rights, children's rights/welfare, or other related disciplines;
- ii. A minimum of 10 years of working experience in the area of children's rights and climate change or general human rights and climate change in the African context;
- iii. Demonstrated knowledge of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the work of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
- iv. Demonstrated knowledge of climate change-related international and national standards and response mechanisms;
- v. First-hand knowledge and experience of the cultural, social, economic and political context of Africa;
- vi. Fluency in English is required, knowledge of additional African union working languages is desirable;
- vii. Work experience in the AU, UN, and other international organizations, especially in treaty body mechanisms, is desirable;

- viii. Excellent analytical skills using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

#### **IV. Reporting lines**

The external expert will work under the direct supervision and guidance of the ACERWC and the Chair of the Working Group on Children's Rights and Climate Change.

#### **V. Duration and Attendance**

The appointment of successful candidates will commence in April 2024 and end in November 2025. The External Expert will be required to attend all the meetings of the Working Group and selected onsite activities of the Working Group, and they will also be required to attend relevant Ordinary Sessions of the Committee upon request of the Chairperson of the Working Group.

#### **VI. Location**

The appointment will be home-based with the above-mentioned travels to attend meetings and travels to various African countries to undertake on-site activities of the Working Group whenever necessary.

#### **VII. Reimbursement**

The external expert shall not be considered as an employee; as such, they are not entitled to any form of remuneration. However, the full travel costs of the external expert will be covered, and a daily subsistence allowance will be given for the travel duration based on African Union rules and regulations.

#### **VIII. Application**

The application document should consist of the following:

- i. A cover letter summarizing the background of the applicant and why the applicant is interested in the position;
- ii. A Customized Curriculum Vitae not exceeding 3 pages;
- iii. Evidence of educational background and professional experience;
- iv. Samples of publications, professional undertakings or related activities which demonstrate the applicants' expertise on the areas of children's rights/human rights and climate change; and
- v. Names and contacts of three references.

#### **XV. Application deadline**

Application should be submitted to the Secretariat of the ACERWC no later than 28 February 2024. Applications should be sent to [acerwc-secretariat@africa-union.org](mailto:acerwc-secretariat@africa-union.org) copying [SenaitY@africa-union.org](mailto:SenaitY@africa-union.org) .