

Call for Submissions! By The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) Special Rapporteur on Birth Registration, Name and Nationality in Africa

Topic: Digitalization of Birth Registration in Africa: challenges and opportunities for children's rights

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), in line with its mandate to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children in Africa, is seeking written submissions on the digitalization of birth registration on the continent, focusing on challenges and opportunities in relation to children's rights. This call for submission is led by the Special Rapporteur of the ACERWC on Name, Nationality and Birth Registration, in accordance with her mandate to seek, receive, examine and act upon information on the situation of birth registration, name and nationality in Africa, as provided for in the Resolution establishing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. The submissions will inform the development of a Guidance Note to State Parties to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

The Committee recognizes the growing interest in leveraging digital technologies to improve civil registration systems, including birth registration. While digitalization presents clear opportunities, it also raises questions about equity, accessibility, data protection, and the broader implications for children's rights.

The Special Rapporteur invites civil society organizations, international organizations, children and youth-led organizations, academics, and other interested stakeholders to provide written inputs.

Guiding Questions

Please consider responding to the following questions, where relevant to your experience or context:

1. Trends and Status

- What is the current status of digital birth registration and certification in your country or region?
- Are there existing digital or mobile platforms used for civil registration? Who manages them?
- What trends (e.g., mobile apps, blockchain, biometric data) are emerging in this field?

2. Opportunities and Benefits

- What benefits have digital birth registration systems brought (or could potentially bring) for children's rights (e.g., legal identity, access to education, social services)?
- How can digital systems improve coverage, particularly for children in hard-to-reach areas, informal settlements, refugee and stateless populations?

3. Challenges and Risks

- What are the main challenges to digitalizing birth registration in your context (e.g., infrastructure, digital literacy, trust, legal frameworks)?
- Are there concerns about exclusion or marginalization of certain groups (e.g., children with disabilities, children in rural or nomadic communities)?
- How are data privacy and protection ensured for children's information?

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4. Children's Participation

- Have children and young people been consulted or involved in the design or monitoring of digital birth registration systems?
- What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure their voices are meaningfully included?

5. Legal and Policy Frameworks

- What laws, policies, or regulations support or hinder the use of digital birth registration?
- Are there safeguards in place to ensure non-discrimination, accessibility, and the best interests of the child?

6. Good Practices and Innovations

- Can you share any examples of successful initiatives or pilot programs in your country or elsewhere in Africa?
- What lessons have been learned from those experiences?

7. Recommendations

- What practical steps should be taken by State Parties to promote inclusive, rights-based digital birth registration systems?
- What role should the ACERWC, African Union, or regional economic communities play in supporting this transition?



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Submission Details

- Submissions should not exceed **5 pages**, and may include relevant annexes or links to case studies.
- Contributions may be submitted in the official languages of the African Union.
- Deadline for submission: July 10, 2025
- Email submissions to: acerwc-secretariat@africa-union.org and samrawitgetaneh@africa-union.org