

**ACERWC Secretariat**

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**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE**

**OF THE CHILD**

**APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Appointment Period December 2025- November 2027**

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| **External Experts (4)** |
| **Key Task:** Serving in the working group of the ACERWC on Children’s Rights and Climate Change, in the fulfillment of the mandate of the working group.  |
| **Duty station**: Home based with travels to attend meetings of the Working Group, on-site activities of the Working Group and Ordinary Sessions of the Committee.  |
| **Contract type and duration**: Part-time external experts (4), for 2 years |
| **Date of appointment**: December 2025 |

1. **Background**

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges confronting the planet with disproportional impact on the African continent, and with profound implications for the rights and welfare of children. Africa is among the regions most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, despite contributing the least to global greenhouse gas emissions. Children, due to their age, evolving capacities, and dependence on caregivers, are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. They bear the brunt of its consequences on survival, development, protection, and participation.

The ACERWC Continental Study on Children’s Rights and Climate Change highlights that extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and storms are becoming more frequent and intense across Africa. These disasters threaten children’s right to life, health, and survival, while also contributing to widespread displacement. In 2023 alone, millions of African children were forced to move as a result of climate-related disasters, heightening their exposure to protection risks such as trafficking, child labour, separation from families, and recruitment by armed groups. Moreover, prolonged droughts and declining agricultural productivity contribute to malnutrition, jeopardising children’s rights to adequate food, health, and development.

Education is equally affected, as floods and storms damage school infrastructure and displacement interrupts learning continuity. Girls are particularly at risk, facing heightened vulnerabilities such as child marriage and school dropout during climate crises. Furthermore, displacement and destruction of community structures threaten children’s access to identity documents, nationality, and cultural belonging. Beyond the immediate impacts, climate change imposes long-term psychological and developmental stress, undermining the right of children to grow up in safe, nurturing environments.

The Study also underscores the significant challenges African States face in addressing these impacts. These include limited integration of child rights into climate change policies and strategies, severe financial and technical constraints in adaptation and mitigation measures, and weak cross-sectoral coordination between environmental, child protection, and social development sectors. The lack of disaggregated data on climate impacts on children hampers effective policy-making, while children’s voices remain largely absent from climate decision-making processes.

These realities point to an urgent need for a child rights–based response to the climate crisis in Africa. The African Children’s Charter provides a solid normative foundation for States to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of children in the context of climate change. The ACERWC established the Working Group on Climate Change and Children’s Rights in 2020, taking in to account the need for a concerted effort to address the plights of African children in the climate crisis. The primary aim of the Working Group is to promote a child rights-based approach to climate action in the continent, thereby ensuring that children are protected from the impacts of climate change. The working group is composed of four Members of the Committee and four external experts. A dedicated Working Group on Children’s Rights and Climate Change will enable the ACERWC to deepen its engagement with States and other stakeholders, provide guidance on integrating child rights into climate action, and ensure that African children’s unique vulnerabilities and voices are prioritised in the continental and global climate agenda.

In this regard, the services of external experts are sought to serve as members of the Working Group on Children’s Rights and Climate change. 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 the Working Groups as Special Mechanisms within the ACERWC.

1. **Main duties and responsibilities**

The external experts, 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 related to the establishment of the Working Group and reiterated as follows;

1. Disseminate the findings and recommendations of the ACERWC Continental Study on Children’s Rights and Climate Change, and monitor their implementation by Member States.
2. Develop guidelines and practical tools to assist Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and other stakeholders in integrating a child rights–based approach into climate change policies, strategies, and programmes.
3. Engage with governments to promote the adoption of laws, policies, and strategies that safeguard the rights and welfare of children in the context of climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience-building.
4. Undertake awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives to galvanize action on children’s rights and climate change at continental, regional, and national levels, including through engagement with civil society, child- and youth-led organizations, African Union organs, United Nations agencies, and development partners.
5. Conduct fact-finding and promotional missions in Member States of the African Union to gather evidence and support child-sensitive climate action.
6. Issue communications (statements, urgent appeals, resolutions, or reports), subject to approval by the ACERWC, on children’s rights and climate change in the continent, or concerning a specific country, region, or emerging climate-related condition.
7. Collect, examine, and act upon information on the impacts of climate change on children’s rights from Member States, National Human Rights Institutions, intergovernmental organisations, UN agencies, civil society organisations, children, and other stakeholders.
8. Support the development of ACERWC documents concerning children’s rights and climate change, including General Comments, resolutions, policy briefs, and thematic reports.
9. Facilitate the participation of children and young people in discussions and decision-making processes related to climate change, ensuring their voices and perspectives are incorporated into responses at all levels.
10. Report to the ACERWC on the activities undertaken under the mandate of the Working Group, including progress achieved, challenges encountered, and recommendations for further action.
11. **Qualifications**
12. Advanced university degree in law, human rights, children’s rights, environmental law, climate change, development studies, or other related disciplines.
13. At least 10 years of professional experience in the area of children’s rights, or in related fields such as environmental justice, human rights and the environment, climate adaptation/mitigation.
14. National of an African country and residing in Africa,
15. Demonstrated knowledge of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the work of the ACERWC.
16. Strong familiarity with international and regional child rights standards, as well as climate governance frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, the African Union Climate Change Strategy, and CRC General Comment No. 26 on children’s rights and the environment.
17. Languages: Fluency in one of the AU working languages is required.
18. Institutional Experience: Prior work with the AU, UN, or other international and regional organisations, especially in treaty body mechanisms or climate/environmental governance, is desirable.
19. Excellent analytical, research, and writing skills, and demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with multi-stakeholder groups, including child- and youth-led organisations.
20. **Reporting lines**

The external experts will work under the direct supervision and guidance of the ACERWC and the Chairperson of the Working Group on Children’s Rights and Climate change.

1. **Duration and attendance**

The appointment of successful candidates will commence in December 2025 and end in November 2027. The external experts will be required to attend all the meetings of the Working Group and selected activities of the Working Group. They will also be required to attend relevant Ordinary Sessions of the Committee upon request of the Chairperson of the Working Group.

1. **Location**

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

1. **Reimbursement**

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

1. **Application**

The application documents should consist of the following:

1. A cover letter summarizing the background of the applicant and why the applicant is interested in the position;
2. A Customized Curriculum Vitae not exceeding 3 pages;
3. Evidence of educational background and professional experience;
4. 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
5. Names and contacts of three references.
6. **Application deadline**

The application should be submitted to the Secretariat of the ACERWC no later than 20 October 2025. Applications should be sent to opportunities-acerwc@africanunion.org copying samrawitgetaneh@africanunion.org.