



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

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**47th ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS
AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACERWC)
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REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

1. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC/ Committee) held its 47th Ordinary Session from 17 to 26 April 2026 in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho. The Session was preceded by the validation of the ACERWC Strategic Plan 2026-2028, Working Group Meetings, and bilateral engagement with the Government of Togo. Major activities during the Session include: the Swearing in of the New elected members of the ACERWC, Panel Discussion on the theme of the Day of the African Child 2026 “Ensuring *universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene for every child in Africa*”, Presentation of the ACERWC’s report on the 2nd phase assessment on the implementation of Agenda 2040, Consideration of State Party and Complementary Reports, launching of the Guiding Note on Reporting on the Rights and Welfare of Children with Albinism, and the ACERWC ‘s Study on Harmful Practices, Consultation with RECs on Violence Against Children and Considerations of Communications among others. The paragraphs below summarise the main issues of the agenda items.

ATTENDANCE

2. The 47th Ordinary Session was attended by Representatives of Member States, Representatives of the African Union Commission, African Union organs, Children’s Representatives, Civil Society Organisations, Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions, Representatives of UN Agencies, as well as international, regional and local non-governmental organisations.

ITEM 1: Procedural Matters and Organisation of Work

3. Prior to the opening ceremony of the 47th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC/the Committee) convened to consider some preliminary procedural matters. After adopting the agenda, the Committee proceeded to assign Members for the consideration of applications for Observer Status. Rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs were also assigned to consider Civil Society Organisation (CSO) complementary reports and Communications.

ITEM 2: OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

4. The Acting Executive Secretary, Dr. Ayalew Getachew, moderated the Opening Ceremony. He gave brief remarks, reflecting on the state of children’s rights in Africa, and welcomed the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child by the Federal Republic of Somalia, making it the 52nd country to ratify the African Children’s Charter. He acknowledged the presence of diverse stakeholders, highlighting their invaluable contributions to the work of the ACERWC. He further recognised the presence of Her Majesty the Queen of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development. He also extended gratitude to the Kingdom of Lesotho for its continued support of the ACERWC.

5. The following Statements were made during the Opening ceremony:

Remarks by Liekolo Montsi, Children's Representative from Lesotho

6. Liekolo Montsi'i, Child Representative, opened her remarks by commending the AU's establishment of the Committee to protect children's rights and welfare continent-wide by holding Member States accountable and prompt reflection on child-related issues. She highlighted how annual themes guide prioritisation towards Agenda 2040: an Africa fit for children. Emphasising every child's fundamental right to dignity, safety, and basic needs, she stressed unequal access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.

7. She described the 2026 Day of the African Child as timely amid climate change, population growth, and infrastructure gaps, stating it as critical for children's survival, health, education, and rights realisation, particularly noting risks to girls fetching water. She called on the Committee to ensure Member States implement prior recommendations, citing past sessions where children urged laws against child marriage, yet gaps persist in some countries. She concluded her remarks by commending the Committee, focusing on children with disabilities, including the Guiding Note on reporting for children with albinism, and urged collective action for an Africa fit for every child.

Remarks by Mr. Kgomotso Montso, Representative of the CSO Forum

8. Mr. Kgomotso Montso, the CSO Forum Representative, delivered remarks congratulating the newly elected Chairperson, Madam Sabrina, and commending the Committee and Secretariat for convening the 47th Ordinary Session, which centres the voice of the child. He noted that since 13 April 2026, CSO Forum members gathered in Maseru under the theme "Inclusion for Every Child: Building an Equitable Future Across Africa." He highlighted key messages that every child counts without exception, equity requires action, and Africa's future depends on including excluded children. He further highlighted systematic exclusion from education, healthcare, protection, and opportunities, particularly for children with disabilities, girls, and those in vulnerable contexts, citing data on out-of-school children, low school attendance among children with disabilities, and the economic cost of exclusion.

9. He noted that inclusion requires recognising every child's inherent worth and prioritising their best interests, while identifying gaps such as weak budgets, limited data, discrimination, and harmful norms, alongside positive practices. He reaffirmed the commitment of CSOs to partner with the Committee and other stakeholders to advance inclusion for every child, emphasising that every child must not only survive but also learn, lead, participate, and thrive with dignity.

Remarks by Mr. Marcel Clement Akpovo, Regional Director, Regional Hub for East and Southern Africa, and Representative to the African Union (Virtual)

10. Mr. Marcel Clement Akpovo, the OHCHR Representative to the African Union (AU), addressed the Session on behalf of the UN Human Rights Office, expressing honour in engaging with the Committee as a committed ally in translating norms into tangible change for children. He underscored the strong, principled partnership anchored in the complementarity between the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, supported by the ACERWC-UN CRC MOU. He highlighted the expanded Addis Ababa Roadmap

under the AU-UN Joint Framework on Human Rights, which strengthens collaboration between ACERWC, UN mechanisms, and OHCHR offices, noting concrete results such as the joint Guiding Note on reporting on children with albinism to be launched during the Session.

11. He outlined key areas of OHCHR support, including assisting States in reporting, follow-up, and implementation, building capacity and coherence between the Charter and CRC processes, and amplifying thematic priorities and children's voices through direct engagement. He concluded by reiterating OHCHR's commitment to strengthening implementation, follow-up, and coordination across African and UN human rights frameworks.

Remarks by Dr Laila Omar Gad, UNICEF Representative to the AU

12. Dr. Laila O. Gad, UNICEF Representative to the AU, shared insights from UNICEF's Global Outlook 2026, noting that climate change, conflict, and economic constraints are eroding gains for children, particularly in Africa. She outlined key trends influencing children's rights and well-being and noted that strained social protection and public funding threaten universal coverage for 1.4 billion children, particularly in Africa, and highlighted that advances in AI and technology, while offering learning opportunities, also pose risks such as online harm and misuse of data, requiring safeguards and skills development.

13. She emphasised that these interlinked trends require whole-of-society action, calling on stakeholders to adopt coordinated approaches that place children at the centre, accelerate Agenda 2040 and Charter implementation for marginalised children, strengthen protection for children in conflict, disaster, and displacement, and invest in youth skills and resilient systems. She concluded by affirming UNICEF's continued commitment and partnership with the African Union and ACERWC to promote and protect children's rights and well-being.

Remarks by Prof James Mouangue Kobila, Chairperson of Network of African National Human Rights Institutions

14. Prof. James Mouangue Kobila began his remarks by emphasising the importance of strengthening partnerships and creating enabling conditions for effective collaboration among institutions working on children's rights. While acknowledging progress made, he noted that significant challenges persist and stressed that partnerships must translate into concrete actions to advance children's rights. He highlighted that children across Africa continue to face interconnected challenges, and raised concerns about irregular migration, noting that children, especially girls, face risks of trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, as well as detention in conditions that fall short of child rights standards.

15. He drew attention to the impact of conflict on education, citing Sudan, where over 8 million children are out of school, noting that such disruptions undermine development. He also highlighted emerging risks linked to technological advancements, including online exploitation and misuse of personal data. He underscored the role of National Human Rights Institutions in ensuring implementation at the national level and emphasised child participation, access to nutrition, education, and strengthened child protection mechanisms. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his institution's commitment to supporting the Committee's mandate and strengthening collaboration.

Remarks by Hon. Louis Cheick Sissoko, presiding officer, African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council (Virtual)

16. Hon. Louis Cheick Sissoko began his remarks by underscoring that while Africa has made significant progress in developing legal and policy frameworks for the protection of children's rights, law alone is insufficient without effective implementation and social legitimacy. He highlighted the persistent gap between progressive frameworks and the lived realities of African children, attributing this to uneven institutional capacity, inconsistent political commitment, and limited integration of communities. He noted that violations of children's rights occur in everyday environments and emphasised the critical role of communities and civil society organisations as frontline actors in child protection, while cautioning that where these actors are under-resourced, protection risks becoming symbolic rather than effective. He further linked the African Union's theme on water and sanitation to children's rights, stressing that lack of access undermines health, education, dignity, and development, particularly for children in vulnerable and rural settings.

17. Hon. Louis called for reflection on the effectiveness of existing commitments, questioning whether children are safer and whether legal protections are consistently enforced. He highlighted ongoing challenges, including harmful practices and substance abuse, as well as inequalities affecting children in conflict settings, rural areas, and those with disabilities. In conclusion, he emphasised the need for a more inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach that places communities, civil society, and children at the centre, and reaffirmed the Committee's role in strengthening implementation and accountability mechanisms.

Remarks by Hon. Idrisa Sow, Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Virtual)

18. Hon. Idrissa Sow commended the Committee for convening the Session as an important platform for dialogue and innovation to advance the promotion and protection of children's rights in Africa. He highlighted the strong and growing cooperation between the ACHPR and the Committee, rooted in a shared mandate and vision to strengthen the African human rights system for children. He noted that this collaboration is reflected in participation in statutory sessions, joint advocacy, promotional activities, and normative work, including General Comments and studies on key child rights issues. He also referenced joint initiatives addressing harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and stressed the need to further strengthen these efforts in light of persistent and emerging challenges affecting children.

19. Hon. Sow emphasised the importance of accelerating the ratification and effective implementation of the ACRWC, calling on Member States that have not yet ratified it to do so without delay. He underscored that universal ratification is essential for harmonised protection of children's rights, and highlighted the Session's theme on universal access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) as a fundamental right linked to children's health, education, life, and development. In conclusion, he called on State Parties to strengthen laws, policies, and programmes to ensure equitable access to safe WASH services. He commended the Committee's dedication and reaffirmed the ACHPR's commitment to supporting its mandate, expressing hope for meaningful outcomes to improve the well-being of children across Africa.

Remarks by Hon. Lady Justice Tujilane Chizumila, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (Virtual)

20. Hon. Lady Justice, Tujilane Chizumila, began her remarks by reiterating the shared mandate of the African Court, the African Commission, and the ACERWC in promoting and protecting human rights on the continent. She noted that this common mission requires strengthened coordination and cooperation among the three organs to ensure effective protection, particularly of children's rights. She highlighted the Court's jurisprudence on children's rights, referencing landmark decisions such as *APDF and IHRDA v Republic of Mali*, where principles on the minimum age of marriage and consent were reaffirmed, and legislative reforms were ordered, as well as a case against the United Republic of Tanzania concerning the protection of vulnerable children and reparations.

21. She underscored ongoing collaborative efforts among the three organs, including annual tripartite meetings, joint publications such as the African Union Human Rights Yearbook, and initiatives to enhance the Committee's capacity to refer cases to the Court, noting that further efforts are required to strengthen cooperation and implementation. In conclusion, she stressed the need to reinforce collaboration to ensure effective protection of children's rights and human rights more broadly, reaffirming the Court's commitment to supporting joint efforts and wishing participants fruitful deliberations.

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, AU Special Envoy for Children Affected by Armed Conflict

22. H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne began her remarks with a moment of silence to honour children who have lost their lives in the context of armed conflict, and expressed gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility to be part of the ACERWC 47th Ordinary Session as she assumed her role as the Special Envoy of the African Union on Children Affected by Armed Conflict. She indicated that children, as the most vulnerable victims of armed conflict, are often caught in ceasefire situations and have their lives shattered by violence and require the utmost protection. Ambassador Jainaba further indicated that global military spending is approximately 4.2 trillion, noting that the security of children should be measured by their protection from violence. She highlighted that Sudan, now in its fourth year of conflict, remains one of the most dangerous places for children, with about 8 million children out of school.

23. She emphasised her commitment to ensuring that the voices of these children are heard and that no child should be seen as collateral damage. She noted that, as these children live with trauma, efforts to end violence must be paired with comprehensive support for their recovery, including education, health services, psychosocial support, safe environments, and ending the recruitment of children into armed groups. She called on Member States to reaffirm their commitment to child protection, strengthen existing frameworks, and hold accountable those who violate these rights, while also urging civil society organisations to continue their advocacy. She concluded by expressing her commitment to work tirelessly to ensure that no child is forced to bear the burden of war.

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Antoinette Rose-Quatre CEO, APRM (Virtual)

24. H.E. Ambassador Marie-Antoinette Rose-Quatre began her remarks by commending the African Union for dedicating 2026 to the theme "Assuring Water

Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems,” as well as the strong policy frameworks reflected in Agenda 2063 and the SDGs to achieve these goals with a child-centred approach. She stressed that a large number of African countries lack adequate water access and that children, as a vulnerable group, are affected by inadequate hygiene, which contributes to child mortality. She noted that water scarcity, particularly in rural areas, is partly linked to gaps in government strategy and foresight. She further indicated that, following the AU’s 10-year implementation plan, Member States are expected to ensure implementation, given their high level of responsibility.

25. She further highlighted that failure to deliver leads to a crisis, compounded by weak governance frameworks, limited political will, and poor financing, including illicit financial flows. She called on Member States to demonstrate decisive commitment to implementation, ensure accountability and transparency, and strengthen institutions and cooperation to address these challenges. She noted that the APRM’s objective is to ensure accountability and compliance, prioritise investment in children’s rights, and diversify financing. She concluded by commending the ACERWC for its efforts to ensure the implementation and protection of children’s rights.

Remarks by Hon Sabrina Gahar, Chairperson of the ACERWC

26. The Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Sabrina Gahar, welcomed participants to the 47th Ordinary Session and expressed appreciation to the Kingdom of Lesotho for its continued hospitality and support. She noted that the Session builds on the 46th Ordinary Session, which marked the 35th Anniversary of the African Children’s Charter, emphasising the need to advance commitments towards children’s rights. She highlighted that the Session marks the commencement of a new term with the swearing-in of newly elected members, and noted progress in State Party reporting, including Burundi, Eritrea, and Kenya, as well as legislative developments in some Member States. She further emphasised that the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with National Human Rights Institutions strengthens accountability and partnerships.

27. She expressed concern over ongoing challenges, particularly the impact of armed conflict on children, including displacement, violence, and limited access to services, and underscored the need for strengthened collective action.

28. The Chairperson highlighted the 2026 Day of the African Child theme on water, sanitation, and hygiene, noting its alignment with the AU Theme of the Year and its importance for the realisation of children’s rights. She further noted the Committee’s ongoing work, including the Draft General Comment on Article 13, the adoption of the General Comment on Article 28, and the Strategic Plan for 2026–2028. In conclusion, she reaffirmed the importance of partnerships and collective commitment to advancing children’s rights and wished participants a productive Session.

Remarks by Hon Pitso Lesaoana, Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development- the Kingdom of Lesotho

29. Hon. Pitso Lesaoana expressed that it was a great honour and privilege to address all participants and the Committee. He commended the launch of the Guiding Note on Reporting on the Rights and Welfare of Children with Albinism. He further noted that Lesotho’s Children’s Protection and Welfare Act (2011) clearly states that no child shall be subjected to discrimination based on disability, but should be afforded equal rights, respect, and dignity as others. Hon. Lesaoana also indicated his recognition of a presentation by Save the Children on the Guidance on How to Report on

Environment and Climate Change Issues, noting that climate change is another issue the continent is tirelessly working to address, as it affects children.

30. He lastly noted with appreciation the presentation by the Committee on the second phase assessment of the implementation of Agenda 2040, which serves as a point of reference for Member States when preparing their annual budgets. He appealed to all Member States to consider investing in the African child through budget allocation, and concluded with thanks, before inviting Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso to officially deliver her opening remarks.

Remarks by Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso of the Kingdom of Lesotho

31. Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso expressed great honour in welcoming all participants to the 47th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. She remarked that during the previous Session, the Committee commemorated the 35th Anniversary of the Children's Charter, which Lesotho has ratified and is therefore obliged to implement. She noted that the commemoration was a milestone in the protection of African children, a reminder to implement the Charter and affirm a shared commitment to protect and nurture children. However, she noted the challenges faced by African children and the violations of their rights, and that Member States are responsible for ensuring minimal impact of these violations by undertaking actions, including reporting, to enhance implementation, and advised timely periodic reporting.

32. She stressed that these reports strengthen the collective resolve to advance the protection of children with dignity. Additionally, she expressed her heartfelt appeal to ensure universal access to water, sanitation, and hygiene in Africa, noting that access to water is a fundamental right for children. She indicated that Lesotho has successfully completed WASH in Schools projects, including in some of the remote areas of the country.

33. She expressed her gratitude to the AU for entrusting Lesotho to host the 47th Ordinary Session, noting that it contributes to shaping the future of leaders who are children. She emphasised that children are honoured and celebrated, as their future is worth every effort made. In conclusion, she officially declared the 47th Ordinary Session open.

Performance and poem.

Swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected members of the Committee

34. The following were sworn in as Members of the Committee:

- I. Hon. Anne Musiwa
- II. Hon Wilson Almeida Adão
- III. Hon. Robert Doya Nanima
- IV. Hon. Joseph Sunday Sinnah
- V. Hon. Wael Abdel-Razek
- VI. Hon. Albab Tesfaye
- VII. Hon. Satang Nabaneh

ITEM 3: Remarks by Member States

35. The following Member States gave brief progress reports on the initiatives taken to implement the provisions of the ACERWC: The Federal Republic of Somalia, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Zambia, Peoples' Democratic Republic of Algeria, Kingdom of Eswatini, Republic of Uganda, Republic of Kenya and Republic of Zimbabwe. The representatives highlighted challenges faced in the promotion and protection of children's rights and reiterated their commitment to the implementation of the ACERWC. The Representative of Somalia announced the country's official ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and highlighted the readiness of the Government to work closely with the Committee for the implementation of the Charter.

36. The representatives of Member States further recommended the prioritisation of the most pressing child rights concerns and enhanced coordination in the child-rights sector. They also emphasised the need for national and regional programmes that are sustainable, avoid duplication and maximise scarce resources in times of restricted funding and beyond.

ITEM 4: Remarks by NHRIs with Affiliate Status

37. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) with affiliate status from the following countries delivered brief remarks: Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Togo and Ethiopia. They reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Collectively, the statements highlighted persistent and emerging child rights concerns across their respective contexts, including violence against children, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, child labour, and inadequate access to education, inadequate frameworks for the protection of children in the digital environment, health, and protection services. The representatives particularly underscored the severe impact of conflict, displacement, drought, and climate change on children, citing the destruction of schools, high dropout rates (especially among girls), unsafe labour conditions in agricultural plantations, continued gaps in safeguarding within residential childcare and rehabilitation centres, and systemic barriers affecting children with disabilities.

38. They concluded with recommendations to the Committee and Member States that include stronger law enforcement, enhanced accountability mechanisms, improved child-centred humanitarian assistance, investment in safe and inclusive education systems, and strengthened collaboration between governments, NHRIs, civil society, and the ACERWC, while also acknowledging positive legislative and policy developments aimed at improving child protection and service delivery

ITEM 5: Statements by UN Agencies and International Partner Organisations

39. Ms. Nimo M. Ismail, IOM Regional Thematic Specialist for Protection, commended the ACERWC for its continued commitment to protecting children's rights in Africa, particularly children affected by migration and displacement. She noted with appreciation the development of the ACERWC Strategic Plan (2026–2028) as an important framework for structured engagement, collaboration, resource mobilization, and political support to strengthen child protection across the continent. She stressed that children remain central to IOM's migration mandate and emphasised the growing crisis of child displacement in Africa due to conflict, violence, and disasters, with millions of children forced to move internally and across borders under dangerous

conditions. Her intervention further raised concern about the increasing scale of irregular child migration along major routes such as the Mediterranean, Eastern, and Southern corridors, where children face serious risks including death, trafficking, detention, sexual violence, and exploitation. It was noted that IOM supports children on the move through migrant response centres, providing shelter, health care, legal assistance, psychosocial support, family tracing, and reintegration services. At regional and continental levels, IOM supports policy development, regional consultative processes, and AU frameworks to address trafficking and smuggling. Ms. Ismail concluded by emphasising that every child, regardless of legal status, deserves protection and opportunities for a safe future.

40. Ms Isadora Plumasseau, representative of the UN OHCHR addressed the Committee during the general statements segment, welcoming the platform offered to UN agencies and partners and noting the concrete follow-up it has generated since the previous session. Ms Plumasseau presented two priority areas for strengthened cooperation with the Committee. First, on the rights of children on the move, it reported on ongoing support to the Platform of Independent Experts on Refugees' Rights (PIERR) and proposed a joint webinar convening the Committee, PIERR, UN actors and regional mechanisms as a practical next step. Second, on engagement with UN Special Procedures, OHCHR encouraged more systematic information-sharing with the Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, closer alignment with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in support of the Committee's forthcoming study on the recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups, and a structured dialogue with the UN CRC, CEDAW and the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls on the rollback of children's rights and gender equality in the African context.

41. It was emphasised that these avenues of collaboration can be pursued within existing frameworks, in particular the AU–UN Joint Human Rights Framework and the Addis Ababa Roadmap, which provide a clear basis for structured engagement between African and UN human rights mechanisms. The OHCHR Regional Hub for East and Southern Africa expressed its readiness to serve as a bridge between the Committee, UN Special Procedures and other relevant mechanisms, and OHCHR reiterated its availability to support the Committee in practical ways, including the induction of newly elected members.

Signing of MOU with NANHRIs

ITEM 6: Statements on the recommendations of the CSO Forum and Children's Consultation

42. A child representative from the CSO Children Forum recommended that the Committee expands capacity-building platforms to raise awareness of children's rights and the ACRWC, enhance accountability mechanisms to include children's voices in periodic reports, continue engaging children from rural and remote areas, establish child-led or advisory groups at national or continental levels for direct input on children's rights, ensure countries submit reports on child rights issues, and develop child-friendly materials to help children understand their rights.

43. The CSO Forum reiterated its commitment to collaborating with the Committee to advance the implementation of the Charter and Agenda 2040. The Forum also shared their commitment to launch a digital advocacy campaign that calls for inclusive

policies, national action plans and programmes for every child regardless of disability, gender, location, language, or background as a way of advancing an equitable future for all children in Africa; with universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene for every child in Africa as the core pillar. The Forum invited the Committee to co-create and join the Forum in the campaign.

44. They congratulated the ACERWC on its Strategic Plan and recommended strengthening accountability mechanisms, including more rigorous State party reporting on child-responsive budgeting, school re-entry, FGM, Albinism indicators, CAAC, and emerging issues. It urged to integrate technical expertise and practical experiences from ground practitioners by including CSO representatives in Working Groups, enhancing information exchange between the Committee's thematic work and child rights practitioners domestically. The Forum also called for CSO representatives to present at pre-session meetings to highlight current issues, encouraged States to establish comprehensive child protection frameworks with coordination mechanisms and standardised helplines under number 116, and urged regular engagement on their accessibility and resourcing. It emphasised finalising and publicising the African Jurisprudence Database, improving transparency, and monitoring compliance. The Forum recommended intensified oversight of harmful practices like FGM and child marriage, especially in conflict zones, and stronger enforcement of SRHR provisions through explicit State reporting and follow-up. It encouraged embedding early childhood targets in climate-related laws and policies, aligned with the Nurturing Care Framework, and promoted accessible, child-friendly, multilingual resources for the Committee's communication and procedures.

ITEM 7: Briefings by Organizations with Observer Status

45. . The following organizations with observer status addressed the Committee: Joint Forces Alliance (Child Fund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Village International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, World Vision), African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), African Movement of Working Children and Youth (MAEJT), Equality Now, Centre for Reproductive Rights, Women's Probono Initiative (WPI), Graça Machel Trust, Human Rights Watch, Centre for Human Rights, Nelson Mandela Child Funds, Africa Early Childhood Network, Centre for Child Law, Under the Same Sun (together with the Africa Albinism Network), REPSSI, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), FOST, International Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA), Network for Community Development (NCD), Volunteers Welfare for Community-Based Care of Zambia (VOWAZA), Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN), Winford Centre for Children and Women, Zamara Foundation, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network and Nyale Institute.

46. They shared updates on their ongoing initiatives and provided the following recommendations and considerations for the Committee:

- Strengthen guidance to Member States to boost investment in children—covering education, health, nutrition, WASH, and protection. Use the AU 2026 WASH Theme to promote child-specific standards, monitoring, and accountability. Advance the General Comment on Article 14 (2)(c) through inclusive, evidence-based consultations. Integrate climate and environmental risks into reporting, jurisprudence, and advocacy. Support implementation of Concluding Observations with civil society

and partners. Continue to highlight children's voices, especially those most affected by conflict, poverty, and climate shocks.;

- Raise awareness of children with albinism's rights and protections. Follow up with Tanzania to implement the African Court's decision in Application 019/2018. Promote campaigns to challenge myths about albinism and foster respect and inclusion.

- Encourage Member States to include sunscreen as an essential medicine for persons with albinism and ensure it is available in hospitals, clinics, schools, and rural communities. Adopt national plans aligned with the African Union Plan of Action on Albinism (2021–2031). Protect children with albinism from discrimination, violence, trafficking, and harmful practices. Strengthen inclusive education by preventing bullying, providing reasonable accommodations, and ensuring equal treatment. Expand dermatological, low vision, psychosocial, and rehabilitation services, especially in rural and underserved areas.

- Continue emphasising kinship care as a vital path to inclusion and urging governments to support kinship carers. Provide technical guidance to Member States on including children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities in reports. Develop mechanisms for meaningful consultation with children with disabilities and their families. Establish a monitoring framework to hold Member States accountable for reporting obligations.

47. Encourage systematic review of civic space in State Party reports and Concluding Observations, focusing on children's rights; give normative guidance on Civil Society Organisations' role in implementing the African Charter, especially in improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

- Engage Member States and African Union organs to halt the development of the Charter, which endangers protections for girls and rights in Africa; review the outcome document of the ACERWC decisions; and participate in the upcoming conference on African Human Rights bodies' decisions.

- Prioritise developing comprehensive, context-responsive continental Adolescent SRHR guidelines and strengthen engagement with States Parties to turn commitments into meaningful change for all children, especially the vulnerable. Issue guidance to support Member States in addressing legal barriers affecting children's sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.

- Position the Nurturing Care Framework by WHO, UNICEF, and World Bank as a key tool for interpreting Article 14(2), encouraging States to embed its five components—good health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, early learning, safety—in all early childhood laws, policies, and budgets. Elevate early childhood as a core pillar of the Committee's mandate and guidance. Use the Framework as a systems lens to examine climate impacts on early childhood, guiding States in their responses. Report systematically on climate impacts during early years, explicitly recognising young children within climate governance and accountability frameworks. Develop targeted guidance to help Member States interpret and apply early childhood rights indicators.

- Mainstream mental health support in policies for children affected by conflict; strengthen Member-States' accountability to invest, implement ACRWC provisions, and report; include MHPSS indicators in reporting to boost accountability and child rights protection.

- Prioritise the communication against Zambia, request urgent provisional measures, and engage the Zambian government to ensure immediate screening, treatment, environmental cleanup, and accountability for children affected by toxic exposure.

- Call on all warring parties in South Sudan to end civilian abuses, release children, ensure humanitarian access, and support accountability. The Committee should also push the South Sudan government to ratify and implement the African Charter and coordinate with regional and international mechanisms to bolster protection.

48. Engage directly with Nigeria's representatives to understand the barriers to compliance and explore what technical or other support may be needed. We also urge the committee to revisit its implementation of the decision strategy, so that all our efforts for these children do not end up in vain due to a lack of implementation.

- Engage the Republic of Kenya on strengthening universal birth registration systems, enhancing child-friendly justice and protection mechanisms, improving coordination among relevant institutions, and ensuring adequate budgetary allocations and monitoring frameworks to support the effective implementation of child rights laws and policies;

- Urge the Government of Uganda to increase the budget for gender-responsive social protection, establishing and funding a national network of accessible, child-friendly shelters nationwide. Integrate comprehensive GBV responses into social programs, including emergency support and access to legal, health, and psychosocial services. Strengthen GBV law enforcement and ensure equitable service delivery, prioritizing rural and refugee communities. Review and amend school re-entry guidelines to meet human rights standards, implement the recommendations of General Comment No. 9 on education for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers, and report on their support status for school retention.

- Urge the Government of Zambia to review and amend the sexuality education curriculum for accurate, timely, and comprehensive information; revise laws like the Marriage Act, Penal Code, Education Act, and Anti GBV Act to recognize children under 18 and provide protection; enforce the Children's Code Act and Marriage Act to prevent under-18 marriage, including customary law; decentralize child protection units and increase funding for One-Stop Centers to offer child-friendly justice and medical services in rural areas; and improve data collection and monitoring systems to track cases of child sexual violence and harmful practices.

- Invite Member States to utilise the Operational Protocol for the Implementation of Child Participation as a point of reference for the implementation of effective children's participation.

- Urge Member States to harmonise laws, set and enforce 18 as minimum marriage age, ensure multisector collaboration with adequate funding and support for law enforcement, and enact comprehensive laws against FGM and child marriage aligned with regional standards. Strengthen enforcement through investigations, prosecutions, and monitoring. Include children's rights to Water and Sanitation in legal frameworks, ensuring infrastructure safety to prevent GBV, and provide free menstrual health products in schools with inclusive, accessible sanitation that meets universal design standards.

- Call on Member States to improve regulation of corporate conduct, ensure environmental cleanup and healthcare for children affected by pollution, and guarantee access to safe water and sanitation in mining areas. Adopt and implement National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights that include children's rights, strengthen birth registration and legal safeguards against statelessness, establish mechanisms to identify and protect stateless children, and accelerate ratification of the Protocol on the Right to Nationality and Eradication of Statelessness in Africa. Ensure accessible schools with trained teachers and assistive devices; strengthen legal safeguards, close legislative gaps, enforce anti-trafficking and SGBV laws, resource child protection, and provide survivor-centred justice with psychosocial support and safe reporting mechanisms.
- Urge Member States to ensure that laws do not criminalise or penalise consensual peer-to-peer sexual behaviour in ways that undermine their dignity, adopt child-friendly legal frameworks on consent to access SRHR, grounded in child rights principles and the evolving capacities of the child, and ensure that no child is subjected to criminal or punitive measures for seeking or accessing lawful SRH services, including safe abortion.

ITEM 8: Briefings on intersession activities and planned activities of Working Groups of the ACERWC

WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

49. Hon. Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing, Chairperson of the Working Group on Children's Rights and Business presented the activities undertaken by the Working Group in the first quarter of 2026. She highlighted that activities had been undertaken in commemoration of the Safer Internet Day, including through the development of a Statement and participation in platforms to raise awareness on the AU Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy, on the Safer Internet Day. Furthermore, the Working Group participated in a launch titled State of Play 2025: AfCFTA and Human Rights report organized by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, wherein contributions were made around the impact of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement on children's rights, highlighting both opportunities and risks, and emphasizing the importance of integrating child rights impact assessments into trade and investment processes.

50. Hon. Kembo further outlined the planned activities of the Working Group for 2026-2027 which include developing guidance for Member States on integrating children's rights and business into the Committee's existing state party reporting processes; guidance on children's rights and social media regulation and on children's work, family support and child labour. She further highlighted that the Working Group plans to undertake targeted engagements with National Human Rights Institutions, the private sector and the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat, as these are key stakeholders in the discussions around the protection of children's rights in the context of business. Additionally, she mentioned that the Working Group is also exploring avenues to participate in the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, as well as the Africa Business and Human Rights Forum. She called on all partner organizations and stakeholders to continue supporting the activities of the Working Group, to advance the rights of children in the context of business.

WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

51. Hon Poloko Nuggert Ntshwarang, Chairperson of the Working Group briefed the 47th Ordinary Session on the outcomes of the Working Group's 10th meeting, held in Maseru, Lesotho on 16 April 2026, and on the two-year Work Plan approved for the period April 2026 to December 2027. The Working Group resolved to continue its campaign entitled "1.1TooHigh: A Child Rights-Based Approach to Climate Action in Africa," which serves as the unifying framework for all activities under the current mandate. The approved Work Plan is organised around five thematic areas: awareness raising and citizens' engagement, including the issuance of statements and factsheets on key commemorative dates and the convening of workshops with civil society organisations and National Human Rights Institutions; research and studies, including advocacy briefs on climate migration, children's rights to food and water, climate policies, and just and green transition; global and regional engagement, including an engagement strategy for COP 32, Guidelines for Member States on integrating a child rights-based approach into their Nationally Determined Contributions, subject to the availability of resources; and continuous monitoring.

52. The Chairperson also drew the attention of the Committee to the timely intervention made by Save the Children at the 10th meeting of the Working Group, which presented Guidelines to integrate environment and climate change into CSO monitoring and alternative reporting on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee was informed that this instrument is expected to strengthen the quality of evidence submitted to the Committee on the climate-child nexus. The Chairperson concluded with a call for closer and more sustained partnership, calling on Civil Society Organisations and academic partners to work more closely with the Working Group throughout this mandate. A specific call for collaboration, technical, financial and political, was issued on the development of Guidelines to Member States on the integration of a child rights-based approach into climate policies, including Nationally Determined Contributions, as a priority normative deliverable of the Working Group's mandate.

WORKING GROUP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

53. Hon. Robert Nanima, Chairperson of the ACERWC Working Group on Implementation of Decisions and Recommendations briefed participants on the activities of the Working Group. He noted that the Working Group successfully concluded its 9th meeting, marking the first engagement of the 2026–2027 term, and providing an opportunity to reflect on progress, challenges, and the future direction of its work. He noted that during its 9th meeting, the Working Group engaged with key partners, including the African Court, the Centre for Human Rights, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to strengthen collaboration and coordination.

54. He further noted that a key milestone was achieved by the Working Group with the adoption of a decision by the Executive Council in February 2026, encouraging Member States to establish National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up (NMIRFs), and calling for strengthened engagement with AU organs to address challenges affecting the Committee's monitoring mandate. He further highlighted that this decision calls on the Committee to engage with the PRC Sub-Committee on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights to address challenges

hindering the effective discharge of its mandate and report to the PRC Sub-Committee on the status of implementation of its decisions.

55. Hon. Nanima further outlined the planned activities of the Working Group, including the launch of a publication on the status of implementation of decisions; development of a second edition of the implementation study; organisation of regional workshops on the establishment of focal points for the ACERWC; engagement with OHCHR on NMIRF and the UN National Recommendations Tracking Database; and strengthened engagement with civil society organisations and national human rights institutions. In conclusion, he emphasised that the implementation of children's rights is a shared responsibility and called on all stakeholders to strengthen cooperation to ensure that the Committee's decisions are fully implemented and translated into tangible improvements in the lives of children across the continent.

WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

56. Hon. Anne Musiwa, Chairperson of the Working Group on Children with Disabilities of the ACERWC, underscored the Working Group's unwavering commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of children with disabilities across Africa since. The Chairperson outlined the activities of the Working Group prior to the 47th Ordinary Session, noting that the Working Group successfully convened its 10th Meeting on 15th April, which was reflective and forward-looking. Particularly, the Working Group discussed how to work with the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development (HHSD) on the Continental Initiative on Inclusive Vision and Hearing During the meeting. Hon Musiwa highlighted inter-session activity of the Working Group which is the panel discussion held at the 28th CSO Forum in collaboration with the Africa Albinism Network on the Guiding Note on Reporting on the Rights and Welfare of Children with Albinism. The Guiding Note is designed to assist Member States, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in reporting on the rights and welfare of children with albinism.

57. Hon. Musiwa emphasised that the flagship activity of the Working Group for the next two years is the development, finalization, and dissemination of the General Comment on Article 13 of the Charter on the rights of children with disabilities, with an inclusive process involving targeted consultations. She also outlined that the Working Group intends to focus on the popularisation of the Study on the Status of Children with Disabilities in Africa through a Policy Brief. Furthermore, the Chairperson noted the Working Group's intention to collaborate with stakeholders to conduct Training for CSOs on disability mainstreaming and to amplify issues of children with disabilities. Hon Musiwa underlined that the Working Group is also committed to strengthening evidence and data about children with disabilities in African Member States. In conclusion, Hon. Musiwa expressed deep gratitude to the Members of the Working Group for their continued commitment and made a call for all stakeholders to strengthen collaboration with the Working Group to achieve an inclusive Africa where children with disabilities equally, thrive, belong and participate.

ITEM: 9: Panel Discussion on the theme of the Day of the African Child 2026
“Ensuring universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene for every child in Africa.”

Welcome remarks and introduction to the panel

58. Hon. Wael, Special Rapporteur on Health, introduced the panel, setting out the objectives of the engagement. He highlighted the initiatives undertaken by the Committee and the AU on the guarantee of WASH for all children in Africa. Hon. Wael highlighted the unique value of water in the continent, and consequently for the child. However, he said, that despite such importance, WASH remains dangerously low on the continent, leading to the spread of avoidable diseases. He further stated that the panel would initiate the long-overdue conversation to identify specific challenges and to share best practices to ensure universal access to WASH for all children in Africa.

Presentation of the DAC 2026 Concept Note and the overview of the theme

59. Ms. Aouatef Legal Researcher at the Secretariat of the ACERWC presented the Concept Note for DAC. She shared that WASH was a continental priority given the levels of water poverty. Ms Aouatef informed that access to WASH was a right protected by Article 14 of the Charter and intrinsically linked with all other rights, especially ESC rights. She emphasised that the panel sought to amplify children's voices on access to WASH, foster dialogue, encourage partnerships and strengthen action on providing universal access to WASH.

Reflections on the AU Theme of the Year 2026 and continental priorities on water and sanitation, including strategic directions under the Africa Water Vision 2063 and Agenda 2063

60. The presentation was made by Mr Francis Meinrald Mtitu, Special Advisor on WASH at the AU Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment. He highlighted the state of access to WASH on the continent, currently indicating that millions still lack access to safe and portable drinking water. He shared the implementation framework to achieve access to WASH goals under the Agenda 2063, comprising policy and governance reforms; political leadership and advocacy; as well as investment mobilisation and pipelines; knowledge platforms and innovation. To this end, the Department has also adopted a workplan for the implementation framework and in the first quarter of 2026 they focused on strengthening governance and advancing gender equality in WASH. Finally, the Special Advisor reiterated that water was a strategic resource to unlock economic prosperity in the continent and ensure the dignity of all African children.

Good practices initiatives supporting child-responsive WASH in Africa

61. Dr. Laila Gad: UNICEF Representative to the AU began her presentation by sharing that the water poverty situation was dire in that 1 in 4 Africans has no water. She shared that girls were especially affected due to the lack of gender segregated latrines, which threatened regular school attendance. Similarly, Dr. Gad informed that water poverty prevents girls from attending school when they are in their menstrual cycle. She shared UNICEF initiatives to support access to WASH in Africa. These include supporting governments, at both the central and local level, with programs such as promoting group handwashing, promoting safe play for children, and emphasising careful disposal of baby nappies. Dr. Gad explained that children of differing vulnerabilities were disparately affected by lack of access to WASH chief amongst them children affected by armed conflict, as well as babies, especially those born in facilities with no running water. The UNICEF Chief made a number of recommendations to the Committee. She emphasised that State parties ought to be

engaged on Access to WASH when they present their initial and periodic reports. Moreover, she shared that WASH will be the theme for the High-Level Political. She also shared that there would also be the world water conference and recommended that the Committee convene a side event on access to WASH in Africa.

National Initiatives and experiences in advancing WASH for children, Representative of Kingdom of Lesotho

62. The Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Mrs. Nthabiseng, emphasised that advancing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in the country is driven by a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach involving government, civil society, development partners, academia, and UN agencies, under the leadership of the WASH Technical Working Group coordinated by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Within this framework, Lesotho is implementing nationwide initiatives targeting underserved and hard-to-reach communities, notably the WASH School Guidelines based on UNICEF's Three-Star Approach, which promote inclusive access for all learners, including children with disabilities, and aim to ensure safe water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools. In addition, a large-scale WASH project is reaching 250 rural communities, 125 schools, and 15 health facilities through the construction and rehabilitation of water and sanitation infrastructure to improve children's health, school attendance, and dignity, particularly for girls. The government's experience highlights the importance of inclusive, child-friendly services, prioritising marginalised areas, and strengthening community engagement and partnerships to ensure sustainability. Overall, Lesotho reaffirmed that a coordinated, inclusive, and community-driven approach is essential to achieving universal access to WASH services for every child.

Experience sharing on access to water, sanitation and hygiene and its impact on children's lives, Akinbo Shiloh Darasim - children representative from Nigeria

63. A 10-year-old child representative from Nigeria, Akinbo delivered a compelling intervention highlighting that access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is essential for children's rights, health, education, and protection. She emphasised that lack of access to clean water and safe sanitation exposes children—especially girls—to serious risks, including violence, exploitation, and child marriage, which in turn leads to school dropout, health complications, and cycles of poverty and inequality. Drawing from community experiences, she linked inadequate WASH services to broader harmful practices such as early marriage, child labour, and denial of education. She called for comprehensive solutions, including increased awareness, promotion of girls' education, stronger enforcement of laws, and economic support for vulnerable families. In her recommendations, she urged governments and stakeholders to expand access to WASH services, strengthen child protection systems, and foster partnerships, concluding with a powerful appeal for collective action to safeguard the rights and future of every African child.

Role of the civil society in advancing children's rights to WASH, World Vision International

64. The representative from World Vision International presented the civil society perspective, emphasizing the vital role that non-governmental actors play in advancing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) across Africa, particularly in the face of overlapping challenges such as COVID-19, poverty, and fragile contexts. He highlighted that children and vulnerable populations continue to face disproportionate

barriers in accessing clean water, sanitation, and nutrition, with serious consequences including poor health outcomes and increased school absenteeism, ultimately affecting long-term development. Reaffirming that WASH is both a human right and a child's right, he stressed that this obligation is grounded in legal and policy frameworks such as Agenda 2063, and requires sustained, collective action.

65. Civil society organizations, he noted, play a critical role in supporting implementation of continental commitments at national and community levels, advocating for accountability, and ensuring that policies translate into real impact, especially for marginalized groups. He underscored the importance of community engagement and child participation, noting that sustainable solutions depend on amplifying the voices of those directly affected, while also strengthening monitoring systems to track progress and extend services to underserved areas. The presentation further emphasized inclusivity, particularly for persons with disabilities, alongside the need to strengthen governance, mobilize financial resources, and promote climate-resilient WASH solutions, especially in schools. Highlighting impact, he cited World Vision's achievements between 2021 and 2025, including reaching millions with water, sanitation, and hygiene services, demonstrating both progress and the scale of remaining need. He concluded by calling for stronger partnerships, expanded interventions, and effective implementation of regional frameworks at local levels, stressing that achieving universal access to WASH requires coordinated action, sustained investment, and a firm commitment to leaving no child behind.

ITEM 10: Conversation with the AU Special Envoy for Children Affected by Armed Conflict

66. Hon. Sabrina Gahar, Chairperson of the Committee, opened the conversation by highlighting the impact of armed conflict on children and underscoring the Committee's role through the ACERWC Special Rapporteur on Children in Conflict Situations. She highlighted that the objectives of the conversation were to strengthen strategic coordination by aligning the priorities of the ACERWC and the AU Special Envoy, identifying concrete joint advocacy actions to mobilise high-level political commitment for the protection of children in conflict situations and mobilise partnerships by identifying opportunities for coordinated engagement with stakeholders. She then handed over to the ACERWC Special Rapporteur on Children in Conflict Situations to lead the discussion.

67. Hon. Robert Nanima moderated the conversation and expressed appreciation for the appointment of the AU Special Envoy on Children Affected by Armed Conflict. He noted that the position, established following sustained advocacy, provides an opportunity to advance the agenda at high-level spaces. He further highlighted that the appointment is timely, as children continue to face grave violations and other emerging challenges such as mental health concerns, and emphasised the importance of collaboration and collective action.

68. During the conversation, the AU Special Envoy for CAAC, H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne underscored the importance of strengthened collaboration between her Office and the Committee, noting their complementary roles. She emphasised the need to move towards structured and results-oriented collaboration. She identified five priority areas for joint action: joint advocacy and high-level political engagement; monitoring, reporting and accountability; legal and policy domestication support; joint field-based programmes; and strategic partnerships and resource mobilisation. She further highlighted opportunities for joint missions, including engagement with the AU

High Representative to Sudan and outreach to armed groups to advocate against the involvement of children in conflict, as well as collaboration in regions such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes. The Special Envoy also highlighted ongoing efforts regarding political commitment, including strengthening the Banjul Process as an annual statutory platform, with increased high-level engagement and community-level interactions to raise the visibility of the African Union.

69. Following the conversation, Committee members and participants engaged in an interactive discussion, welcoming the establishment of the Office of the Special Envoy and emphasising the need to ensure continued access to education during conflict. They highlighted the impact of armed conflict, including violence against children, collapse of systems, harmful practices, and sexual violence, noting its gendered nature. Issues relating to child justice and reintegration were also raised, including the treatment of children formerly associated with armed groups, the need for mental health and psychosocial support, and challenges of reintegration in ongoing conflict settings.

70. In her concluding remarks, Amb. Jagne emphasised the importance of ensuring access to education in camps and settlements, continued advocacy with governments, and engagement with continental and international mechanisms. She underscored the importance of education for both learning and psychosocial support, highlighted the need to prioritise violence against children, and emphasised strengthening accountability through high-level advocacy across Member States.

ITEM 11: Presentation on ACERWC's report on the second phase assessment on the implementation of Agenda 2040

71. Prof. Frans Viljoen presented the draft Assessment Report on the Second Phase of Implementation (2021–2025) of Africa's Agenda for Children 2040: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children. and recalled that Agenda 2040, adopted in 2015, is structured around ten Aspirations to be realised through five successive five-year phases. The draft report covers both an assessment of Phase 2 progress and a consolidated Action Plan of updated steps for 2026–2030. The assessment drew on document and literature review, State Party reports, Concluding Observations and stakeholder consultations, while acknowledging methodological constraints including the lack of reliable and comparable data, incomplete 2015 and 2020 baselines, and the emergence of new cross-cutting issues such as climate change, digital harms and artificial intelligence. The overall finding was that while the ten Aspirations are on different stages of implementation, progress has been registered in birth registration, education, health and child protection, against a backdrop of rising armed conflict, inequality, extreme poverty, climate shocks and declining public funding.

72. On Aspiration 1, the presentation highlighted the consolidation of the Committee's supervisory role. Continental ratification advanced to 51 State Parties by 2025, with Somalia ratifying in April 2026. The Committee received twelve new communications, concluded two amicable settlements, expanded its soft-law output to four new General Comments, four Guidelines, three Guiding Notes, eight thematic studies and four thematic resolutions, and strengthened its implementation architecture through the Working Group on Implementation of Decisions, seven follow-up missions, and the granting of observer status to twenty-five additional CSOs (total of sixty-one) and affiliate status to twenty-two NHRIs.

73. Across the substantive Aspirations, progress was registered through consolidated children's statutes in Kenya and Zambia; significant gains in birth registration and

digitalisation of civil registration in Rwanda, Namibia, Senegal and Uganda; strengthened maternal health and malaria prevention; expanded early childhood education frameworks in Madagascar, Sierra Leone and South Africa; reinforced prohibitions of child marriage without exception; and advances in child-sensitive justice, including the raising of the minimum age of criminal responsibility and the abolition of the death penalty for children in Liberia and Sudan. Gains were, however, tempered by persistent child food poverty and weak social protection, the continuing high prevalence of FGM in several States notwithstanding the successful resistance to reversal in The Gambia, and the continued recruitment and use of children in armed conflict despite advances toward enforcement of the 'straight-18' standard.

74. Aspiration 10 recorded unprecedented advances in child participation, moving from symbolic to structured engagement. The Committee adopted the Child Participation Guidelines (2022) and took part in the inaugural Africa Children's Summit (2023), while Kenya, South Africa and Zambia integrated children into State reporting processes. Cross-cutting achievements included greater alignment of the AU Child Rights Ecosystem, expansion of soft-law guidance, and a transition from norm-setting to system-building, alongside rapid digital transformation that risks perpetuating exclusion if not adequately safeguarded.

75. By way of conclusion, the presentation proposed a way forward anchored in the adoption by States of National Agenda 2040 Implementation Plans, with clear, time-bound and measurable targets for 2030, developed through inclusive processes involving NHRIs, civil society and children. These Plans should sit within a whole-of-government approach integrating child rights across policies, sectoral strategies and budgets, supported by disaggregated data systems, annual reviews of progress, and end-of-phase reporting to the Committee, shifting the focus from systems to measurable results and impact in children's lived realities.

76. Committee Members and, participants of the Session commended the presentation and made remarks and questions. Inquiry was made regarding consideration of emerging issues that were not envisaged during the drafting of the Agenda, and issues that should have been included. The representative of UNICEF Dr Gad further announced the near completion of the first ever annual report on the state of children in Africa, done in collaboration with the AUC and in line with the AU theme of the year, which will be the case for subsequent reports. In response to the reflections, Prof Viljoen noted that one of the key issues that should have been highlighted but is missing from the Agenda is that of children on the move. He noted that some aspirations are specific by their nature and potentially achievable, such as birth registration while others speak to intractable issues that are complex and may not be fully achieved such as health-related aspirates. He further highlighted that climate change, and technological advancements affect all the aspirations, even though their impact was not thoroughly envisaged during the drafting of the Agenda, hence reflection on that is necessary going forward. He concluded by suggesting that every five years, the annual state of children in Africa report of UNICEF/AUC can be consolidated to feed into a five-year report on implementation of Agenda 2040.

ITEM 12 : State Party Report Consideration: First Periodic Report the Republic of Burundi

77. A high level and multi-sectoral delegation from the Republic of Burundi led by Mr. Hatungimana Parfait, Assistant to the Minister of Justice, Human Rights, and Gender in Burundi, presented the summary of Burundi's combined second to seventh periodic

reports on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the measures taken by the State Party to implement the rights enshrined in the Charter as well as the previous recommendations. In his opening statement, Mr. Parfait indicated that Burundi has made significant efforts to strengthen the normative, institutional and operational frameworks relating to child protection, and has undertaken various actions to promote and protect children's rights. The delegation highlighted that children's issues have been increasingly integrated into national legal and policy frameworks, including the 2018 Constitution, particularly Articles 44 and 46, which guarantee children's rights to protection, well-being and child-friendly justice. Reference was also made to key legislation such as the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Labour Code, and the Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, as well as policies including the National Child Protection Policy and the Education Sector Development Plans (2012–2020 and 2022–2030), National Strategy to combat the phenomenon of children in street situations and adult beggars; National Strategy on Alternative Care for Children; and the policy on free education. The delegation further outlined progress in education through free basic education, in health through free healthcare for children under five and maternal services, and in child justice through the establishment of specialized juvenile chambers. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to addressing violence, exploitation and abuse of children and to advancing access to essential services, including water, sanitation and hygiene, within its long-term development vision 2040-2060.

78. The Committee thanked the head of the delegation for his introductory remarks and commended Burundi on the submission of its periodic report. The Committee also appreciated the progress made by the Government in implementing the Charter. The members of the Committee raised several questions and requests for clarification on the following thematic clusters: general measures of implementation, the general principles of the child, as well as civil rights and freedoms. In responding to the concerns raised by the Committee, the delegation informed the Committee that there is currently no specific calendar for the adoption of the Child Protection Code. It was explained that the process experienced delays following the merger of two ministries; however, the Government intends to relaunch the process to finalize the draft. Regarding the Family Protection Code, the Delegation stated that an in-depth analysis is ongoing to determine which matters should be governed by customary law. A commission has been established for this purpose, and its findings have been compiled, validated, and submitted to the National Assembly for consideration. With regard to information on budgetary allocation to child protection, the Delegation informed the Committee that the delegation indicated that resources are allocated across various ministries, including education, health, and justice, which incorporate activities related to children and indicated that information and detailed figures would be provided after consultation at the national level. It was further indicated that international organizations, including UNICEF and UNDP, contribute to efforts aimed at promoting and protecting children's rights. Concerning data collection, it was indicated that disaggregated data exists, including through a national helpline system. With regard to birth registration, the delegation explained that mobile units have been established as part of awareness-raising campaigns. Civil registry officers travel to facilitate the registration of births, and that interoperability has been established between civil registration services and health facilities across the country. It was

further indicated that Penalties for late birth registration remain applicable, however, cases of late registration are very limited.

79. Regarding child participation, the delegation highlighted the role of the FONEB as a national consultative platform for children at communal, and provincial levels. It was explained that representation is ensured across approximately 3,000 hills, with each represented by children including girls, boys, and members of marginalized groups. The Delegation further noted that a budget is allocated for its functioning and that partners support capacity-building activities. Children also participate in the development of communal development plans. The Delegation informed the Committee that a third edition of the National Human Rights Policy (2026–2036) is under development, aimed at addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, including children, persons with disabilities, and persons with albinism. Specialized police units exist across the country to handle cases of violence against children. It was also indicated that no recent cases of violence against persons with albinism have been documented, although protection mechanisms are in place through child protection committees and local authorities. Regarding children from the Batwa community, the Delegation emphasized that they have access to education and health services. A national strategy for socio-economic reintegration and inclusion of Batwa has been adopted, promoting affirmative action measures. These include access to boarding schools and exemption from school fees for successful candidates, as well as access to free health care through medical assistance cards. Concerning the measures taken following the killing of 12 children in December 2023 during an armed attack in Vugizo, Gatumba Zone, Mutimbuzi Commune, Bujumbura Province, the delegation informed the Committee that the Ministry of Justice has taken up the matter and is currently conducting investigations to identify those responsible, including individuals who reportedly crossed borders. It was also indicated that the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, has allocated resources to support the basic needs of the affected families. Surviving children have been supported through access to education and health services. In relation to malnutrition, the delegation noted that several projects targeting children, particularly those under five years of age, are being implemented, including a major programme financed by the World Bank.

80. Following a second round of questions covered issues on health, education, Alternative care and family environment as well as special measures for the protection of the child, the Delegation highlighted that with regard to the improvement of the health sector, since 2021, communal hospitals have been constructed across the country, and that health facilities are now available in all communes, with gradual expansion at the zonal level. Concerning children with disabilities, the delegation informed the Committee that health facilities are designed to respond to their specific needs, with a view to ensuring accessible and equitable access to health services. It was further reported that pregnant women and children under five benefit from free health services. Efforts have been made to improve maternal health care, promote breastfeeding up to six months, and strengthen vaccination campaigns. It was also indicated that the Government works closely with the World Health Organization to ensure the availability of essential medicines and vaccines, which rarely face stock shortages. On access to justice, the Delegation indicated that within the Directorate General for Human Rights, a dedicated unit provides legal assistance to victims of human rights violations, including children. A budget exceeding 50 million Burundian francs is allocated annually to provide free legal aid, including the provision of lawyers for vulnerable groups and children. Concerning children with disabilities, the

delegation noted that Burundi has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adopted national legislation and policies to promote their rights. Measures have been implemented in the education and health sectors, including financial and material support, access to medical care, and specialized institutions such as the CNAR in Gitega and Saint Kizito Institute. With regard to trafficking, the delegation reported that cases have been identified, with some cases already handled by courts. Identification mechanisms have been strengthened through trained social workers at the community level. In terms of victim support, 5 centers have been established, including 2 holistic care centers and 3 integrated support centers providing assistance and reintegration services. In relation to the care and protection of victims, the Delegation indicated that mechanisms have been put in place to identify children at risk or with specific needs. Child protection committees at local levels, in collaboration with local authorities, play a key role in identifying and supporting vulnerable children. With respect to services for victims of violence, the Delegation indicated that holistic care centres provide comprehensive support, including the issuance of medical certificates free of charge. At the community level, trained female community leaders support victims of gender-based violence, while medical certificates are also issued free of charge in hospitals. The Ministry of Justice has also introduced specific judicial measures to expedite cases related to gender-based violence. Regarding alternative care, the Delegation informed the Committee that the Government operates three reception centres for children, each of which includes a child committee. In addition, foster family arrangements are also in place to support children in need of care.

81. In conclusion, the head of the delegation thanked the Committee for considering the State Party report and pledged to implement the Recommendations of the Committee. He also assured the Committee to provide additional information and statistical data once the Delegation is back to the capital. Finally, the Chairperson of the Committee appreciated the Delegation and stated that the Committee, after a careful consideration of the reports, will send recommendations to the Government and undertake a mission to follow up the implementation of the recommendations.

ITEM 13: Presentation of the Draft General Comment on Article 13 on the Rights of Children with Disabilities

Inception Report

82. Mr Lawrence Mute, the Consultant assisting the development of the General Comment, on the General Comment on Article 13 of the Charter presented the inception report. He noted that children with disabilities face various challenges in the continent, however, Article 13 of the Charter does not establish a comprehensive protection and is not aligned with contemporary standards on disability rights. Mr Mute highlighted that the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have more contemporary provisions based on human rights-based approach to disability. However, Article 13 is based on the medical and charity model and establishes qualifications on resource and qualified special measures of protection. Mr Mute emphasised that the purpose of the General Comment is to adopt a contemporary way of understanding Article 13 of the Charter by adopting progressive interpretative standards. The General Comment will also explore how emerging issues such as AI, Climate change and humanitarian crisis intersect with the rights of children with disabilities. Mr Mute explained the objective of the General

Comment which includes to define the elements and content of Article 13; elaborate the nature and scope of the obligations of State Parties; define children with disabilities; highlight the relationship of Article 13 with the general principles of the Charter; and explain the intersectional vulnerabilities.

83. In terms of methodology, the Consultant informed that a comprehensive desk review of the legal and policy frameworks will be conducted; stakeholder consultations undertaken; the draft shared with States for inputs; and the views of children with disabilities be gathered. Mr Mute underscored the importance of ensuring that the General Comment reflects the lived realities of children within Africa, and reiterated ACERWC's commitment to a transparent and inclusive process while encouraging all stakeholders to actively participate in consultations.

84. Mr Mute then provided the outline of the General Comment which contain sections on introduction to explain contextual context as well as rationale of the General Comment; underlying concepts and principles which explores the child rights approach to disability, evolving capacity and the general principles; on content of Article 13 which is a section that will explain definition of children with disabilities, specific measures, physical and moral needs of children with disabilities, the concept of dignity and self-reliance, available resource, movement and access to services, among others. The General Comment will also have dedicated sections to explore the nexus between harmful social and cultural practices, specific vulnerabilities, intersectionality, responsibilities of children with disabilities, Artificial intelligence, climate change. It will also feature a section on the nature and scope of State obligation in the ripple obligations framework namely the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil. This section will also explain State Obligation from perspective of legislative, judicial, budgetary, administrative measures, and monitoring and accountability. Mr Mute also outlined that the General Comment would include a section on the role of various stakeholders including organisations of children with disabilities or persons with disabilities.

85. Following the presentation Members of the Committee and participants provided inputs indicating the need to ensure that the General Comment brings an added value in addition to existing norms such as the General Comment of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on Children with Disabilities and the African Disability protocol. While drawing inspiration from existing norms, standards as well as jurisprudences on children with disabilities, it was suggested to ensure that the General Comment adapts an African perspective and context to bring an added values in terms of the challenges and opportunities of children with disabilities in Africa. It was also suggested to work closely with the Working Group on Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities of the African Commission in the consultation processes of development of the General Comment. Recommendation was also made on the need to focus on the specific needs of various forms of the disabilities including children with albinism.

ITEM 14: Presentation on the outcome of the AUC Child Care Conference by HHS

86. The presentation was delivered by Ms. Alleluia Delphine Dusabimana (CARMMA Plus Senior Programme Officer) on behalf of Prof. Julio Rakotonirina, Director for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development. The presenter commenced by providing an overview of the Africa Childcare Conference, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 18–20 June 2025 under the theme "Building Partnerships for Accelerating Action Towards Quality and Inclusive Childcare in Africa," including the background and context of the AUC Childcare Conference. In this regard, she noted

that ACERWC is part of the African Union Commission task force to advance holistic and inclusive child development.

87. She further outlined the overall and specific objectives of the conference, emphasising the key objectives: to raise the visibility of childcare as a critical issue for Africa's development, gender equality, and early childhood outcomes; to align stakeholders around a shared agenda for childcare that addresses both child well-being and caregivers' economic empowerment; to strengthen advocacy efforts and build momentum for policy change through the dissemination of evidence, tools, and promising practices; and to lay the groundwork for ongoing regional coordination and follow-up mechanisms to monitor progress and sustain momentum beyond the conference.

88. The presenter highlighted key issues and findings, noting in particular the unequal access to affordable and quality childcare services; weak integration of childcare into national social protection systems; high reliance on informal and unregulated care systems; limited public financing and fragmented delivery systems; significant urban–rural disparities in service availability; and the disproportionate exclusion of vulnerable children.

89. She also recalled the involvement and role of the ACERWC and its Secretariat in leading continental child-focused initiatives, noting that it is well positioned to advocate and advise on key and emerging issues related to childcare and early childhood development.

90. The presenter further shared the key recommendations, including a call to action addressed to the ACERWC and partners to: support advocacy by the Government of Uganda to have early childhood development as the theme of the year in 2028; develop model financing frameworks for early childhood development supported by domestic resources; develop a continental early childhood development monitoring framework; and strengthen multisectoral coordination mechanisms.

91. The presenter outlined the main conclusions of the conference, noting that children are Africa's most valuable asset; childcare is an investment in human capital; and partnerships are the engine of scale and sustainability, while emphasising the need to jointly build inclusive systems for every child.

92. Following the presentation, Members of the Committee expressed appreciation and provided constructive comments and feedback. Reflections were shared, with the Committee and participants commending increased efforts around childcare and early childhood development.

ITEM 15: Launch of the Guiding Note on Reporting on the Rights and Welfare of Children with Albinism

Welcoming Remark by Hon. Anne Musiwa

93. The launch of the Guiding Note on Reporting on the Rights and Welfare of Children with Albinism started by a welcome remark from Hon. Anne Musiwa, Chairperson of the Working Group on Children with Disabilities. Hon Musiwa expressed her appreciation to Ms. Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond, United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism for the collaboration and support in the development and Launch of the Guiding Note. She framed the launch as part of a broader effort to ensure that no child with albinism on the continent continues to suffer in silence and invisibility. She stressed that Africa is home to the largest number of children with albinism in the world, yet it remains a region in which

their rights are most violated. In setting out the context for the Guiding Note, Hon. Musiwa highlighted the specific challenges endured by children with albinism including threats to life and physical security; ritual attacks and body parts harvesting; and stigma, bullying and social exclusion. With regard to access to services, Hon Musiwa pointed out serious barriers in education, including the lack of accessible learning materials such as large print, braille and assistive devices, and the lack of teacher training to support children with low vision. She also highlighted challenges in healthcare, particularly limited access to sunscreen, dermatological services, eye care and treatment. In addition, she referred to denial of birth registration, abandonment, statelessness, trafficking and displacement affecting some children with albinism. Hon. Musiwa noted the lack of evidence and data concerning children with albinism, which has contributed to their invisibility in reports, policies and budgets. She explained that the Guiding Note was developed to address this gap. She clarified that it is not a stand-alone reporting obligation and does not replace the Committee's existing reporting guidelines. Rather, it is a complementary, indicator-based framework intended to provide States with clear indicators across critical thematic areas to support them in collecting, presenting and using data in a way that strengthens the realisation of the rights of children with albinism. She encouraged States, NHRIs, civil society organisations and children to use the Guiding Note in their reports to the Committee.

Keynote Address by Ms. Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond

94. Ms. Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond, United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, began by acknowledging the collaboration between her mandate and the Committee over the past years recalling the day of general discussions held on solutions to the challenges of children with albinism in Africa. She welcomed the fact that, within a relatively short period, the Committee had moved from dialogue to concrete action through the development of the Guiding Note. Ms Miti-Drummond emphasised that in many contexts children with albinism are only reflected in reporting in relation to killings or attacks, while broader rights issues such as education, healthcare and family care remain largely undocumented. She highlighted the lack of reliable data as a key barrier, including the absence of information on prosecutions for attacks, school enrolment and dropout rates and health outcomes such as skin cancer which results in exclusion in policy and practice. She argued that without data it is not possible to measure progress, ensure accountability or assess whether justice responses and protective interventions are effective. In that regard, she presented the Guiding Note as a practical instrument that can help States and other stakeholders benchmark the situation of children with albinism, identify what needs to change and track progress over time. She called on all stakeholders to use the Guiding Note as a means of ensuring that children with albinism are recognised as rights holders and meaningfully included in policy and reporting processes.

Presentation of the content of the Guiding Note by Ms. Adiam Zemenfes

95. Ms. Adiam Zemenfes, Senior Legal Researcher at the ACERWC Secretariat, presented the content, rationale, and intended use of the Guiding Note. She explained that the Committee has received reports from 45 countries, yet only around 12 State Party reports mention children with albinism. She stressed that reporting should not only be used in situations where violence has occurred but should also serve as a

platform to share good practices and measures undertaken in relation to children with albinism. She explained that the Guiding Note is developed in response to this lack of reporting and data on children with albinism. Moreover, considering that children with disabilities are not a homogeneous group, the Guiding Note provides for targeted interventions tailored to the specific needs of children with albinism. She noted that the Guiding Note also takes account of existing continental normative standards, thereby serving as a comprehensive tool. Ms. Zemenfes outlined the eight thematic areas covered by the Guiding Note, namely equality and non-discrimination, service delivery and protection of specific rights, name, identity and nationality, protection of children on the move and stateless children, accessibility, participation of children with albinism, inclusive budgeting, and accountability and governance. She explained that the indicators under these themes are intended to guide States and other stakeholders in reporting on issues such as legal protection against discrimination, access to sunscreen and protective care, early medical intervention, cancer screening, access to education and reasonable accommodation, family support, birth registration, protection of displaced children, accessible infrastructure, participation in decision-making, specific budget allocations, and investigations and prosecutions concerning attacks against persons with albinism. She emphasised that the Guiding Note is not only a reporting tool but also a planning and monitoring framework that assists States to identify gaps, design targeted interventions, and track progress over time. She stated that by standardising reporting and providing clearer indicators, the Guiding Note is intended to help State Parties know what data to collect, how to present it, and how to use it to improve implementation.

Added value of the Guiding Note for States Parties: Reflection from the Kingdom of Lesotho by Ms. Relebohile Molapo

96. Ms. Relebohile Molapo, Manager for Disability Services at the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development of the Kingdom of Lesotho, presented the situation of children with albinism in Lesotho. She noted that while Lesotho has not experienced the most extreme forms of violence reported in some other contexts, children with albinism continue to face stigma, discrimination, and exclusion. She highlighted some challenges, such as social misconceptions on albinism, gaps in education due to lack of support for low vision, inconsistent access to healthcare services such as sunscreen and general care and limited visibility in national data systems. Ms. Molapo further explained that although Lesotho has legal and policy frameworks addressing disability and child rights, children with albinism are not always explicitly reflected in these frameworks, which creates implementation gaps. She referred to measures undertaken by the State, including awareness campaigns, social protection programmes, the provision of assistive devices such as spectacles and support measures relating to health and education. At the same time, she candidly acknowledged that these measures are not always sufficiently targeted and that implementation challenges remain, particularly in relation to disaggregated data, rural access to services and adequate accommodation in schools. She welcomed the Guiding Note as a practical tool that can support better data collection, evidence-based planning, stronger reporting, and enhanced accountability by offering a structured framework to move from broad commitments toward more specific, measurable responses for children with albinism.

Added value of the Guiding Note for States Parties: Reflection from the Republic of Madagascar by Dr Fabien Tombohavana

97. Dr Fabien Tombohavana, Director of Human Rights and International Relations, Ministry of Justice, delivered a virtual intervention on behalf of the Republic of Madagascar. He expressed appreciation for the launch of the Guiding Note and highlighted the relevance of the tool for State Parties. He indicated that Madagascar continues to face cases of violence against children with albinism in several regions and called for strengthened measures to eliminate discrimination and eradicate abductions and murders targeting children with albinism. Dr Tombohavana further highlighted the ongoing efforts to strengthen the justice system and reinforce implementation and enforcement measures aimed at addressing impunity for attacks and killings targeting children and people with albinism, including through intensified investigations and stronger accountability for perpetrators. He also referred to efforts to expand sensitisation campaigns, provide legal assistance for children with albinism, and enhance the technical capacity of relevant institutions. In addition, he noted Madagascar's intention to work in partnership with the United Nations on the development of a national plan for the protection of persons with albinism, particularly children, and referred to ongoing efforts to operationalise the technical committee on albinism established in 2023. His intervention reflected the practical value of the Guiding Note for States seeking to strengthen reporting and develop more coordinated legal, policy, and institutional responses.

Stakeholders' Reflection on utilising the Guiding Note to report on the rights of children with Albinism by Ms. Olive Namutebi

98. Ms Olive Namutebi, representing Albinism Umbrella Uganda, provided the civil society perspective on implementation of the Guiding Note. She emphasised the critical role of civil society organisations in bridging the gap between States and affected communities, particularly in reaching children at the grassroots level and collecting disaggregated data. She noted that many children with albinism live in remote areas where State services are limited, and that civil society organisations often play an important role in providing support, visibility, and connection to systems of protection. She also highlighted structural barriers, including stigma within families, geographical exclusion, and limited institutional capacity to engage children with albinism meaningfully. She called for stronger collaboration between States and civil society and emphasised the need for resources to support implementation of the Guiding Note and meaningful participation of children with albinism in reporting and policymaking processes. Her intervention underscored that the usefulness of the Guiding Note extends beyond State reporting alone and includes its use by civil society in complementary reporting, monitoring, advocacy, and in ensuring that the lived realities of children with albinism are reflected in decision-making.

Reflection from a child representative by Ms. Mwape Chimpampa

99. Ms. Ms Mwape Chimpampa, the child representative from Zambia, delivered powerful testimony and intervention by grounding the discussion in lived experience. Her remarks brought into sharp focus the human impact of the structural failures discussed throughout the launch and served as a compelling reminder of why the Guiding Note is necessary. Speaking from her own experience, she reflected on the discrimination, exclusion and lack of support that children with albinism continue to face both in school and community settings. She described how these experiences

affect confidence, dignity, participation and a child's sense of belonging. She highlighted the challenges she faces in the classroom, particularly where appropriate accommodation is not provided and where teachers do not always respond adequately to her needs as a learner with low vision. She also spoke about being denied opportunities to participate on an equal footing with other children, though she later demonstrated resilience and excellence when given the chance. In relation to healthcare, she raised concerns regarding inconsistent access to sunscreen, lack of screening and testing for cancer, and limited understanding among healthcare professionals of the needs of children with albinism. She further noted the absence of specialised clinics and hospitals for persons with albinism in Africa, despite the existence of such facilities in parts of Asia and other regions where the population of persons with albinism is comparatively smaller. She advocated for the establishment of similar clinics and centres on the continent, directly in the processes that shape decisions affecting their rights and welfare. She also called for the production of sunscreens in Africa to ensure accessibility and affordability, mentioning that she is an innovator of organic sunscreens in her country.

100. During the interactive discussion, participants raised several questions and reflections concerning the implementation of the Guiding Note. Participants sought clarity on how the Guiding Note can be integrated into existing State Party reporting and how its indicators may be aligned with national data systems. Concerns were also raised regarding the persistent lack of disaggregated data, particularly in rural and underserved areas, and the implications this has for understanding the scale of the challenges facing children with albinism and for measuring progress. Participants also noted the limited visibility of prosecutions in cases involving violence against persons with albinism and emphasised the need for stronger justice responses, greater transparency, and improved reporting on investigations and outcomes. The importance of ensuring meaningful participation of children with albinism in reporting and policymaking was also highlighted, with participants noting that their lived experiences provide essential insight into whether interventions are effective in practice. Furthermore, the discussion focused on the need for coordinated, multi-sectoral approaches involving education, health, justice, and social protection systems, as well as stronger collaboration between States, civil society organisations, and development partners.

ITEM 16: State Party Report Consideration: Second Periodic Report of the State of Eritrea

101. The ACERWC Chair welcomed, and the Chairperson expressed her gratitude to the Delegation of the State of Eritrea for their participation in the Consideration of the Second Periodic Report (2020 -2024) on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and opened for introductions for the delegation of the State of Eritrea participating virtually. Headed by Mr. Mehreteab Fessehayle, Director General, Department of Social Welfare, the Opening Statement was delivered by H.E Biniam Berhe, *Charge d'affaires*, Embassy of the State of Eritrea to the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent Mission to the African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

102. H.E Biniam expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage with the Committee. He reiterated their commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of

children in Eritrea, and highlighted progress across justice, child protection, health, education, and social welfare. The delegation emphasised reforms such as community conciliation councils to ensure accessible justice, strict prohibitions against violence, and expanded awareness campaigns. Institutional coordination has been strengthened through national and local committees, with children's participation integrated into decision-making. Significant advances were reported in tackling harmful practices, supporting vulnerable groups, and promoting the rights of children with disabilities. Health outcomes have improved, with reductions in child and maternal mortality, near-universal immunisation coverage, and progress toward eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Education reforms include expanded pre-primary schools, curriculum reviews, and inclusive strategies for remote and special-needs populations. Efforts in water, food security, and nutrition further support child well-being. While acknowledging persisting challenges, Eritrea underscored its readiness to engage constructively with the Committee to consolidate gains and address gaps.

103. The Committee commended Eritrea for the progress made in the realisation of children's rights. The Committee sought clarification on several issues from the Periodic report and Response to the List of Issues. The Committee applauded the Government of Eritrea for its efforts and requested further information on legislative reforms undertaken to incorporate the provisions of the charter and emerging child rights issues, and budget allocation. In particular, the inexistence of an Ombudsman or Commission for Children's Rights, government efforts to ensure children have access to justice when judicial systems are inaccessible. Whether the prosecution of the violations, such as sexual violence cases, and the best interest of the child are balanced in community-level intervention. Whether the data repository has the capacity to include issues such as Harmful Practices, Violence Against Children, and Children Without Parental Care and a timeline for adding data disaggregation to the national system; the impact of raising the age of majority to 18 on penalties and accountability for child marriage and the age of criminal responsibility. Protections against discrimination based on religion or disability under Article 3 of the Charter. Whether the implementation of the Best Interests of the Child principle in national policies, strategies to protect children in military service, and measures to prevent evasion of conscription are reviewed for SAWA Military Training School, operated secondary schools, their admission criteria, and age verification during recruitment. Further, how many child deaths have been recorded, progress toward 90% birth registration and what is the progress in terms of achieving the target by 2028, and what are the penalties for late registration; what education coverage gaps exist, including the impact of nominal fees and the implementation of General Comment No. 9, with a consideration of nomadic populations, such as educational adequacy in nomadic communities. Additionally, information was requested on frameworks on privacy and data protection laws concerning children's information. Whether about Violence Against Children, corporal punishment has been criminalised in all settings, including alternative care.

104. The Committee further inquired about the progress toward achieving the WHO 95-95-95 target. They asked for the current status of mental health and psychosocial institutions and care facilities in Eritrea, along with data concerning children committed to such institutions. Additionally, they requested disaggregated data on children with disabilities (CWD) and children in conflict with the law (CWPC) who are institutionalised. The inquiry also encompassed the prevalence of child marriage, including trends, regional variations, exceptions under religious and traditional laws,

and cases of prosecution. Further, they sought information regarding sexual harassment cases involving female recruits in the military and the policies and strategies in place to protect children affected by armed conflict. They queried about best practices for successfully combating harmful practices, existing frameworks for protecting displaced children—particularly refugee and asylum-seeking children, including Eritrean children outside the territory—and policies aligned with the model law on children affected by armed conflict (CAAC). Lastly, they inquired about the progress of implementation concerning General Comment No. 22.

105. In response to the questions, the delegation stated that Eritrea acknowledged the significance of addressing climate issues and has enacted Environmental Protection legislation, which stipulates that every individual is entitled to a clean and healthy environment. Its reform processes are currently ongoing, and its initiatives encompass capacity building and public sensitisation initiatives concerning family and child rights, grounded in African and Eritrean national values, and are conducted under the guidance of external experts. Violence Against Women and Children (VAC), particularly sexual violence in community-based interventions, extends beyond the scope of investigation, prosecution, and conviction of perpetrators. The government actively collaborates with the community and the courts, especially the children and the family, to express their views. Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited in all settings, including residential environments, educational institutions, and alternative care facilities; Eritrea recognises diverse religions under Proclamation No. 82/1995, as guaranteed by the constitution. Civil rights and freedoms are protected under Eritrean law. Concerning child marriage, penal measures are enforced against the perpetrators and those who participated in or assisted the ceremony, with imprisonment terms reaching up to ten years. The age of criminal responsibility is 18 years. The penal code's language uses reformatory measures, and the intention is to rehabilitate the children. Parents are penalised for late registration, and there are awareness programs to encourage early registration.

106. There are 120 Secondary schools; SAWA Military Training School is a program aimed at bridging theories learned into practical experience, has a holding capacity of 20 000, and the selection criteria for recruitment are those who have completed their grade 12. Children are not forced into mandatory service. Those who are underage and medically unfit are exempted. Non-formal education is delivered in their native language for nomadic communities; the curriculum is tailored to their living conditions; accessibility barriers exist solely due to distance, particularly in remote communities; students receive accreditation equivalent to that of traditional schools; additionally, there is a special program for children who did not enrol at an earlier age. Free education is available from primary through tertiary levels, including accommodation; nominal fees are charged to cover administrative expenses. Families unable to afford these fees may apply for a waiver through the local administrative office.

107. There is no specific budget allocation for children; it is made in line with social needs such as education, health, and protection. Small grant programmes are available for schools. The delegation further discussed that, despite efforts to eliminate VAC, behavioural change within communities remains an existing gap. A 75% progress rate has been achieved towards the WHO 95-95-95 targets. There are no child refugees or internally displaced children; however, the government intends to promote the rights of children on the move at both national and local levels. Ongoing efforts aim to minimise the institutionalisation of children and promote family-based

care. Additionally, the government is prioritising human and financial resources to address the remaining gaps.

108. In conclusion, the Committee expressed its gratitude to the delegation from the State of Eritrea for engaging in a constructive dialogue and for the measures implemented to enhance the promotion and protection of children's rights within the country.

ITEM 17: Launch of the ACERWC's Study on Harmful Practices

109. The official launch of the Thematic Report on Harmful Practices Affecting Children in Africa was opened with remarks by Hon. Hermine Kembo, Special Rapporteur on Child Marriage and Other Harmful Practices. She provided an overview of the Report, developed in partnership with Equality Now and adopted at the 46th Ordinary Session. She then highlighted the status of child marriage and FGM as its key themes and acknowledged the compounding impact of emerging issues such as conflict and climate change on harmful practices. Hon. Kembo emphasised that change is achievable when legislation is complemented by effective implementation, inter-ministerial coordination, and community-led initiatives, and concluded with a call to action, urging stakeholders to translate the Report's recommendations into concrete action.

110. The session was moderated by Hon. Satang, Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Children, who acknowledged Hon. Kembo's leadership in developing the thematic Report and coordinated the panel discussion. Ms Hussienatou Manjang, Legal Researcher at the ACERWC Secretariat, then presented the key findings of the Thematic Report. She highlighted that despite years of advocacy and legal reform across the continent, harmful practices persist widely due to structural inequalities, weak enforcement, stigma, and inadequate survivor support. Drawing on an eight-indicator checklist based on the Joint General Comment of the Committee and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on Ending Child Marriage and on FGM and case studies from ten countries across all five African regions, she outlined critical protection gaps, including legal inconsistencies, customary and religious exemptions, and chronic underfunding. She also shared promising practices such as Uganda's Constitutional Court ruling on minimum marriage age, Chief Kachindamoto's annulment of over 3,500 child marriages in Malawi, youth-led advocacy in Zimbabwe, and mobile-based girls' training in Ethiopia during COVID-19. She concluded, highlighting the six key recommendations emanating from the Report: legal reform, multi-sectoral coordination, community engagement, data strengthening, sustained resourcing, and the empowerment of girls and young women as central agents of change.

111. The floor was then opened for a panel discussion. Sally Ncube, Regional Representative for Southern Africa at Equality Now, reflected on how, even though there are legal bans on FGM and child marriages in many places, those laws are not consistently enforced in practice. Ms. Ncube stated that the most significant structural barriers to closing this gap are financing and implementation. She also mentioned overlapping barriers in some communities. She shared some of Equality Now's strategic initiatives to move the law from paper to practice. She also made the following recommendations to ACERWC, to urge member states to (1) fully align national laws with international and regional standards on minimum age of marriage; (2) ensure legislation provides civil and criminal remedies for survivors; (3) ensure enforcement

approaches and strategies protect children from all forms of violence and exploitation; (4) implement survivor-centered justice and protection systems; (5) strengthen children's participation, engagement and partnerships with tradition, religious and community leaders; (6) ensure enforcement of the law by instituting a clear legislative roadmap in their periodic reports; (7) train mandate holders at all levels to handle FGM and child marriage cases with a child-friendly, trauma-informed approach; (8) invest in community-driven education, health, and social protection programs; (9) strengthen the implementation of national plans; (10) ensure sustainable financing and inclusive partnership frameworks that elevate multistakeholder voices and enable long-term, locally led solutions; and (11) link the legal prohibition to social protection programs. Ms Sally concluded by reaffirming civil society's commitment to work with the Committee to turn commitments into safety and safety into justice.

112. Munashe Tofa, Programme Manager at the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF), intervened virtually on behalf of the Secretary General, Her Excellency Ms B. Sekgoma. He began by sharing the stories of two girls who experienced child marriages in different countries of the SADC region. He affirmed the SADC PF's commitment to ending child marriage through the Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage, which this year marks a decade since its development. He acknowledged legislative progress in Member States such as Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, and announced the forthcoming launch of a Digital Dashboard to track real-time implementation progress across the region. However, she cautioned that progress remains dangerously uneven, with seven of sixteen SADC Member States still permitting legal exceptions to the minimum marriage age, rural areas remaining deeply affected, and projections suggesting it could take 200 years to eradicate the practice at the current pace. Mr Tofa called for domestic resource mobilisation, strengthened parliamentary capacity for child protection budgeting, and agile policies responsive to emerging threats such as climate-driven child marriages and online misinformation.

113. Caroline Allan, a 16-year-old child representative from Malawi, responded to a question on what it looks like when a girl's voice is genuinely heard and what still needs to change for that to happen more consistently. Drawing on her lived experience, Caroline described how poverty and inadequate sexual and reproductive health information led to a teenage pregnancy at 14, after which she was forced into child marriage. She recounted subsequent hardships, including physical abuse, food insecurity, and the burden of childcare, before being supported by the Parent-Child Communication programme implemented by Malawian NGO YONECO with UNFPA support, which facilitated family reconciliation and her return to school. Caroline noted encouraging community-level shifts, including girls participating in youth groups, radio, and Children's Parliamentary sessions; improved school sanitation facilities; reduced absenteeism; and traditional leaders establishing bylaws to hold parents accountable for school enrolment. She nonetheless highlighted persistent gaps, including cultural norms that silence girls, the prioritisation of boys' voices, unsafe school environments, and a disconnect between existing laws and community awareness. She called for greater investment in mentorship and girls' education, meaningful engagement of men and boys as partners in social transformation, and a stronger emphasis on prevention, closing with Nelson Mandela's words, 'A nation that does not care for its children is not a nation at all'.

114. The second child representative, Shiloh Darasim Akinbo, a 10-year-old from Nigeria, addressed how technology and social media are affecting girls across Africa

and what governments and ACERWC must do to ensure digital spaces protect rather than harm them. She identified four key risks: online grooming used to pressure girls into early marriage or sexual relationships; harmful content normalising child marriage and FGM; cyberbullying silencing girls who speak out; and trafficking recruitment through fraudulent job and scholarship offers on social media platforms. While acknowledging technology's protective potential, particularly girls' use of safe messaging groups to access health and rights information. She stressed that this potential is contingent on adequate safeguards. Her recommendations to governments included extending the Child Rights Act to cover online abuse, integrating digital literacy into school curricula, establishing toll-free multilingual reporting channels accessible to girls without smartphones, and engaging platforms to remove harmful content in local African languages. To ACERWC, she recommended issuing regional online safety standards under the African Charter, establishing a youth panel to bring girls' digital experiences directly to the Committee, publishing annual country accountability reports, and funding African-led digital tools providing access to counselling and legal aid. She concluded that treating online spaces as real spaces where girls' rights matter is the essential condition for technology to serve as a tool of protection rather than harm.

115. Following the panel discussion, the floor was opened for interventions. Contributions were made by representatives of Member States (Tanzania, Mozambique, Egypt, and Zimbabwe), National Human Rights Institutions (Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia), and organisations with observer status, including World Vision. The interventions broadly highlighted the persistent gap between legal reform and behavioural change. They underscored the need to address harmful practices alongside interconnected issues, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, poverty reduction, and positive parenting. Participants further emphasised the critical role of traditional and religious leaders as key actors in driving normative change. Specific concerns were noted regarding developments in Sierra Leone and The Gambia, with NHRIs highlighting the need for sustained engagement by the Committee to support ongoing efforts.

ITEM 18: Consultation with RECs on Violence Against Children in Preparation for the 2nd Ministerial Conference on VAC

116. The Inter-RECs consultation on forging Africa's input into the Second Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children was convened under the ACERWC and the ARISE Africa Initiative—a partnership of ACPF through African Partnership to End Violence Against Children (APEVAC), UNICEF, and WHO AFRO—with technical support from the Baobab Research Consortium led by the Population Council. Chaired by Hon. Satang Nabaneh, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Children, the session brought Regional Economic Communities (RECs) together to shape Africa's Common Position on EVAC. It moved beyond dialogue to practical systems thinking, examining how prevention and response can function across diverse, fragile, and humanitarian contexts. Deliberations focused on three pillars: integrated prevention across all settings, child protection systems as the core delivery architecture, and aligned accountability across continental, regional, and national levels. The consultation also highlighted REC-specific priorities and scalable solutions, grounding the emerging African Common Position in lived realities, system constraints, and

practical innovations, to ensure a unified, implementable framework capable of strengthening protection for every child.

117. Ms Saba Lishan, Coordinator APEVAC, on behalf of Hon. Mama Fatima Singhateh, Caretaker of ACPF and Interim APEVAC Executive Council Chair, framed the consultation as a decisive continental moment to move from fragmented commitments to a unified, implementation-driven African Common Position on ending violence against children. She underscored that while Africa has made important legal and policy progress, the defining gap is no longer intent but consistent delivery at scale across homes, schools, communities, humanitarian settings, and digital spaces. In a context of escalating and intersecting risks, including climate shocks, displacement, and online harm, she called for a deliberate shift toward integrated, systems-based child protection anchored in functioning services, financing, and coordination. She positioned RECs not as conveners of dialogue but as political and operational drivers expected to translate commitments into measurable action and stressed that Africa's credibility in the Second Global Ministerial Conference will be determined by the coherence and ambition built through this process, culminating in ARISE Africa II, where a unified, implementation-ready African position must emerge.

118. UNICEF's message, delivered by Ms. Nankali Maksud, Senior Adviser for the Child Protection and Migration, at the Africa UNICEF Global Programme Division, positioned ARISE Africa as more than a dialogue platform, but as a critical bridge between political commitment and real protection for children. She emphasised that the central question is no longer what Africa has committed to, but whether those commitments are reflected in children's lived realities through functioning systems. She called for the Africa Common Position to be explicitly framed as a systems-strengthening agenda, anchored in financing, workforce capacity, integrated data, and coordinated service delivery across humanitarian and development contexts. She highlighted the urgency of reducing fragmentation across sectors and partners, and ensuring that commitments are translated into national budgets, operational systems, and frontline services. She concluded that progress will be measured not by declarations but by visible, equitable, and sustained improvements in child protection outcomes across the continent.

119. Building on the call for a coherent, implementation-ready African Common Position on ending violence against children, the session turned to its operational core. Regional Economic Communities drew on their diverse social, economic, political, technological, and humanitarian contexts to articulate three strategic priorities each, as their direct input to Africa's Common Position on EVAC. These priorities define what prevention and response must look like in practice across all settings where children live, including fragile and emergency contexts. RECs also reflected on how to better leverage their mandates to support Member States and strengthen cross-REC collaboration. The discussion grounded continental ambition in regional evidence and system realities, ensuring the Common Position is not only coherent in design, but practical, actionable, and capable of delivering real protection for every child.

120. Ms Alice Karara, East African Community Secretariat, presented the EAC contribution as a systems response to a highly heterogeneous region where strong protection systems coexist with fragile and conflict-affected contexts, exposing millions of children to layered risks. She outlined three interconnected priorities shaping the EAC input to Africa's Common Position: first, strengthening protection in conflict and humanitarian settings through a regional protocol on children affected by armed conflict, cross-border referral mechanisms, and child-sensitive early warning

indicators linked to AU systems; second, addressing legal fragmentation by harmonising minimum standards, accelerating treaty ratification, and advancing a model law on online child sexual exploitation to respond to emerging digital harms; and third, closing the implementation gap through investment in workforce capacity, systems strengthening, and sustainable financing, given persistent underinvestment in child protection across Member States. She positioned the Africa Common Position not as a statement of intent but as an accountability framework for implementation and called for structured cross-REC collaboration to ensure coherence, scalability, and measurable protection outcomes.

121. Mr. Tapera H. Chinemhute, Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Analyst, COMESA Secretariat, presented COMESA's contribution to Africa's Common Position on EVAC from a 21-Member State region marked by wide disparities in child protection systems and exposure to conflict, displacement, climate stress, and other compounding risks across member states. He translated this complexity into three strategic priorities for Africa's Common Position: strengthening legal and policy frameworks with emphasis on implementation and domestication rather than ratification alone; integrating child-sensitive indicators into regional early warning and monitoring systems to enable anticipatory protection and timely response; and strengthening partnerships for evidence generation, coordinated programming, and cross-border cooperation. He emphasised that these priorities shift the focus from normative alignment to operational systems capable of delivering protection in both stable and crisis contexts. His intervention positioned COMESA as advancing a prevention-oriented, system-level approach that strengthens coherence between regional integration processes and child protection imperatives.

122. Mr. Olatunde Olayemi, ECOWAS Commission, presented ECOWAS' contribution as a dual-framed response to both direct and structural violence affecting children in a highly mobile and insecurity-prone region. Anchored in ECOWAS child protection frameworks, he outlined three strategic priorities: strengthening national child protection systems through legal reform, integration of child protection into justice and security sector reforms, and improved service delivery alongside social norms change; establishing regional accountability mechanisms through child rights observatories, data systems, and evidence-based monitoring to guide coordinated responses; and deepening cross-border cooperation to address trafficking, children on the move, and violence linked to conflict and displacement. He emphasised that EVAC requires a shift from fragmented interventions to a coherent regional system where mobility, legal status, or conflict exposure does not determine access to protection. ECOWAS thus positions its contribution as embedding child protection within governance, justice, and regional integration systems.

123. Ms. Glorieuse Nzinahora, ECCAS Commission, presented ECCAS's contribution as a response to the structural realities of Central Africa, where fragility, armed conflict, and porous borders make violence against children inherently transnational. She articulated three technically robust priorities for Africa's Common Position: the establishment of a harmonised regional legal and child protection framework to ensure consistent minimum standards and close jurisdictional gaps; the development of an interoperable regional child protection data and early warning system linking civil registration, social welfare, education, and justice systems to improve child visibility and enable real-time risk detection; and the institutionalisation of a regional coordination, monitoring, and accountability mechanism to track implementation, support peer learning, and strengthen enforcement of commitments. She positioned

ECCAS as advancing practical regional integration for child protection, emphasising that shared standards, shared intelligence, and shared accountability are essential for effective prevention and response in complex cross-border contexts.

124. The discussion then moved from regional priorities to practical, tested solutions shared for peer learning, adaptation, and scale by RECs. It highlights two child-centred, scalable approaches already working in real settings. First, Uganda's school-based screening for sexual violence in refugee contexts, which enables early identification, safe disclosure, and timely, coordinated support for highly vulnerable children. Second, the transformation of schools and education systems into protective environments, where prevention, detection, and response to violence are embedded in everyday practice, relationships, and institutional culture. These examples are presented not as stand-alone interventions, but as transferable models to inform REC-led adaptation and scaling across diverse contexts. Together, they demonstrate how systems-based prevention can move from evidence to implementation, strengthening Africa's Common Position with concrete pathways that connect policy ambition to practical, life-saving action for children.

125. Ms. Lydia Najjemba Wasula, Republic of Uganda, presented Uganda's school-based screening model for sexual violence in refugee settings as a systems-embedded, survivor-centred innovation that operationalises early identification and response within national child protection structures. She explained that the model is institutionalised through national training manuals and operational handbooks for para-social workers, ensuring that screening is a routine function of a trained and supervised workforce rather than a stand-alone project. Its effectiveness is grounded in deliberate multi-sectoral coordination across social welfare, health, education, police, and justice systems, enabling immediate referral and integrated care for child survivors. The approach is intentionally child-friendly, allowing flexible disclosure and accompanied referral pathways that ensure psychological first support and continuity of care. She underscores that scalability depends on embedding screening within functioning response systems, noting that identification without care risks harm. The model's adaptation in Ethiopia demonstrates its transferability, reinforcing its relevance as a scalable humanitarian response embedded in national systems.

126. Ms. Stella Odongo Ayo, Coalition for Good Schools, presented a Global South-driven whole-school violence prevention model grounded in the recognition that schools are both universal entry points and strategic systems for child protection. She explained that the Coalition brings together practitioners across Africa, Asia, and Latin America to address the historical marginalisation of Southern expertise in global policy discourse. Central to the intervention is the Good School Toolkit, an evidence-based methodology that transforms school culture, power relations, and institutional practices through structured, whole-school engagement of learners, teachers, administrators, and communities. She highlighted strong evidence of impact, including a 42% reduction in physical violence from staff to learners, achieved through shifts in norms, strengthened governance structures, and institutionalised child participation mechanisms. She emphasised that violence in schools is systemic and rooted in power asymmetries, requiring structural transformation rather than reactive responses. The model's integration into national systems and recognition in global frameworks such as INSPIRE underscores its scalability and policy relevance. She positioned it as a practical pathway to translate global commitments into school-level action, strengthening Africa's Common Position through proven, scalable prevention systems.

127. Ms Saba Lishan, Coordinator of the APEVAC, concluded the consultation by affirming that Africa is now positioned to advance toward a unified Common Position on ending violence against children, one that must ultimately be judged by its impact on children's lives. She noted strong convergence across regions that the central challenge is no longer defining priorities, but ensuring consistent, scalable, and dignified delivery of protection in every context where children grow up. She set out three strategic imperatives to guide the next phase: disciplined prioritisation around a focused set of high-impact interventions capable of delivering measurable change; strong systems grounding through sustainable financing, a capable workforce, coordinated multisectoral services, and reliable data systems that enable early identification and response; and aligned accountability that clearly defines the complementary roles and shared responsibility of continental, regional, and national actors to prevent fragmentation and ensure no child is left behind. She explained that these inputs will be consolidated through the ARISE Africa process, refined through technical engagement, and consolidated and validated at the ARISE Africa II Conference into a coherent African Common Position with clear priorities and delivery pathways. The position will then be anchored within AU structures, endorsed at the ministerial level, and taken forward to the global Ministerial Conference in Manila as Africa's unified voice. She concluded that success will not be measured by the breadth of the document, but by whether it translates into real change for children—reducing harm, strengthening systems of protection, and making safety tangible in their everyday lives.

ITEM 19: State Party Report Consideration: Third Periodic Report of the Republic of Kenya

128. The ACERWC welcomed the delegation of the Republic of Kenya for the presentation of its Third Periodic Report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The report was presented by the Head of Delegation, CPA Carren Ageng'o, Principal Secretary, State Department for Children, who noted that it reflects the status of implementation for the period 2021 to 2025.

129. The delegation identified the full operationalisation of the Children Act, Cap 141, as a major milestone. The Act has fundamentally restructured Kenya's child welfare system, domesticated the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and established enforceable legal protections for the country's 24.2 million children. Building on this framework, Kenya is implementing a transition from institutional care to family- and community-based care, guided by the National Care Reform Strategy (2022-2032). The delegation emphasised that institutional care cannot substitute for a family environment and noted that approximately 84,000 children currently in institutions have living relatives who could care for them with appropriate support. To facilitate this transition, the Government has established a Child Welfare Fund of KES 2 billion to support family strengthening, alternative family care, and the safe reintegration of children into their families. In addition, the Inua Jamii programme, particularly the cash transfer component targeting orphans and vulnerable children, continues to provide critical support, with over KES 1.7 billion disbursed to 430,998 vulnerable households in March 2025. The delegation underscored that such interventions should be understood not merely as public expenditure, but as long-term investments in human capital that protect children from poverty and enable the realisation of their rights.

130. In the health and social sectors, the delegation highlighted both progress in resource allocation and persistent structural challenges affecting children. The delegation reported an 8.7% increase in the national health budget for the 2025/26 financial year, aimed at supporting the transition to the Social Health Authority and advancing universal health coverage, including access to essential services such as neonatal care and immunisation. Notwithstanding these efforts, significant challenges remain. While the national prevalence of female genital mutilation has declined to 15%, certain countries continue to report rates exceeding 80%, indicating uneven progress. In addition, child multidimensional poverty continues to affect nearly 48% of children, while primary school enrolment has declined from 92.5% in 2019 to 78.1% in the post-pandemic period. The delegation indicated that these challenges are being addressed through targeted interventions, including increased school capitation and expanded digital infrastructure in underserved areas, and reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring equitable access to education for all children, regardless of socio-economic circumstances.

131. Following the presentation, the Committee sought clarification on the timeline for gazetting the pending Regulations, including whether any fast-track arrangements had been put in place with the Attorney General's office, and on interim measures to address child labour pending the adoption of the Child Work Regulations. The Committee also requested clarification on the status of enactment of the Chief Justice's Rules for children's courts. In the absence of a National Plan of Action, the Committee inquired how the existing Implementation Framework aligns sectoral budgets with Charter obligations and what measurable benchmarks are used to guide progressive realisation. The Committee sought clarification on the delineation of mandates following Executive Order No. 1 of 2025, as well as the independence and financial sufficiency of the National Council for Children's Services and raised questions regarding the rollout timeline for the Child Protection Information Management System and the budgetary roadmap for expanding Child Protection Units across all counties. Concern was expressed that the allocation to the health sector remains significantly below the Abuja Declaration benchmark of 15%.

132. The Committee raised issues relating to the delayed review of the Witchcraft Act and its implications for children with albinism, the decline in birth registration coverage to 70.4%, and the possibility of introducing permanent fee waivers in ASAL regions. The Committee also inquired about the enforcement of the Child Online Protection Guidelines and the accessibility of reporting mechanisms for digitally marginalised children and raised concerns regarding the continued social acceptance of corporal punishment despite its legal prohibition, progress in implementing the National Positive Parenting Programme, and accountability mechanisms for teachers. The Committee requested a progress update on Kenya's 2024 Bogotá commitments, including workforce expansion, the establishment of specialised courts, and legislative adaptation to address technology-facilitated offences, and raised questions regarding the implementation gap in the registration of intersex children, the availability of structured education plans for children in conflict with the law, and the provision of disaggregated data on budget execution, regional inequalities, school dropout, adolescent pregnancy, and national plans for digital education and AI preparedness.

133. In response to the questions raised by the Committee, the Kenyan delegation provided several clarifications. It confirmed that five of the seven pending Regulations had been completed and reviewed by the Attorney General, while the Adoption Regulations and the Care and Control Institutions Regulations remain pending. The

Regulations that have been finalised will come into force upon publication. The Children (Child Work) Regulations have not yet undergone public participation, although a Regulatory Impact Assessment has been completed. In the interim, existing legal frameworks and awareness-raising measures are being applied to address child labour. The delegation acknowledged that no new National Plan of Action is currently under development, but indicated that the existing Implementation Framework, anchored in national institutions including the National Council for Children's Services, provides a comprehensive basis for implementation. Efforts are ongoing to ensure its accessibility across relevant agencies and stakeholders, and the timely implementation of the Children Act remains a priority. Rules for children's courts have been developed by the Chief Justice and are expected to be operationalised alongside the broader regulatory framework. Following Executive Order No. 1 of 2025, the respective mandates of the State Department for Children's Services and the National Council for Children's Services have been delineated. Proposed departmental structures have been submitted to the Public Service Commission to operationalise this distinction. The Council continues to function as a regulatory body overseeing institutions dealing with children's matters. It receives funding through the State Department, with ongoing efforts to increase allocations, including an additional KES 30 million in the most recent supplementary budget. Recruitment processes for additional staff are underway.

134. The delegation confirmed that 13 Child Protection Units are currently operational within police stations, with additional units under construction, and reiterated the objective of expanding these units across all counties. Measures to address the decline in birth registration include expanding civil registration offices and continuing the implementation of the Usajili Mashinani programme, which engages local administrative structures and integrates registration targets into performance monitoring frameworks. Legislative and policy measures addressing online child protection include the ongoing review of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act to strengthen penalties for offences such as cyberbullying and online grooming. The Data Protection Act of 2019 provides safeguards for children's data, including requirements for parental consent. The National Plan of Action on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is under implementation, supported by awareness-raising initiatives led by the Communications Authority of Kenya targeting parents, teachers, and children.

135. During the second round of questions, the Committee sought clarification on interim measures to retool teacher educators ahead of the Basic Education (Amendment) Bill 2024, the roadmap for extending early childhood development and education to children in correctional facilities, and the sustainability of digital infrastructure and WASH facilities in schools, particularly in Northern Kenya. On health, the Committee requested safeguards to ensure access to specialised tertiary care under the Social Health Authority framework, clarification on the protection of the KES 100 million allocation for persons with albinism during the transition from the National Health Insurance Fund, and guidance issued to healthcare providers to enable lawful reproductive services for adolescents, including survivors of sexual violence, as well as measures addressing provider bias. The Committee raised concerns regarding the use of the Prohibition of FGM Act to prosecute survivors and requested clarification on directives to the Director of Public Prosecutions, as well as whether forced genital examinations constitute degrading treatment. The Committee

requested measures to address barriers faced by intersex children in accessing education, including stigma, low awareness, and restrictive registration systems.

136. The Committee raised concerns regarding the 2025 National Drama Festival incident, gaps in cross-border FGM enforcement, police accountability in the context of the 2024 protests, and the adequacy of psychosocial and legal support for FGM victims. The Committee requested safeguards against prolonged detention during security screenings in ASAL regions and measures to address children remaining in remand beyond the legal six-month limit. On children affected by armed conflict, the Committee requested data on recruitment, rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration, as well as clarification on child participation in countering violent extremism and safeguards within the National Strategy. On refugee children, the Committee requested information on awareness of gender desks, monitoring of unaccompanied children in foster care, and the application of a rights-based approach to movement, detention, and access to services. The Committee requested an assessment of the risk of orphanage trafficking and disaggregated data on institutional closures and reintegration outcomes.

137. Following the second round of questions, the Kenyan delegation provided further clarifications. It reported that the Competency-Based Curriculum rollout is progressing as planned, with the first cohort transitioning to Grade 10 in 2026 at a 99% transition rate. The delegation indicated that 170 teachers have been trained in specialised AI and digital skills across 35 counties through the Teachers Service Commission, with continuous retooling ongoing. It further noted that the Basic Education Bill, approved by Cabinet in February 2026, is currently before Parliament. The delegation confirmed that 2,500 schools have been connected to the internet through the School Connect programme, as part of a broader target of 10,000 schools. It acknowledged infrastructural and inclusion challenges affecting intersex children and committed to providing a comprehensive update in the next reporting cycle. It also confirmed that the KES 100 million allocation for the albinism programme remains protected during the transition from NHIF to the Social Health Authority, covering preventive and treatment-related services. On FGM, the delegation highlighted the ongoing 'My Dear Daughter' campaign under the Anti-FGM Board as a key intervention contributing to the reduction in national prevalence. On children affected by armed conflict, the delegation outlined a multi-agency preventive framework and noted the role of community-based initiatives, including the national parenting programme and the Nyumba Kumi Initiative. It acknowledged the importance of psychosocial support and vocational training for reintegration and committed to providing data on affected children in a subsequent submission. Regarding the 2024 protests, the delegation acknowledged the involvement of children, noted challenges in age identification during dispersal, and referred to accountability mechanisms, the release of minors on bail, and ongoing engagement with families and schools. On health financing, it confirmed that the Social Health Authority benefits package is under continuous review, including the provision of free maternity services for adolescent mothers, with identified gaps escalated for redress. The delegation concluded by inviting further written questions and indicated its readiness to provide supplementary responses where required.

138. In conclusion, the Committee expressed appreciation to the delegation of the Republic of Kenya for the constructive dialogue and the steps taken to implement the Charter. The Committee encouraged the Republic of Kenya to adopt further measures to ensure the full implementation of the Charter. Additionally, the Committee informed

the delegation that the Concluding Observations and Recommendations would be transmitted to the State Party in due course.

ITEM 20: Panel on Closing the Accountability Gap: Financing, Enforcement, Legal Protections, and State Accountability to End Child Marriage in Africa by Equality Now and Girls Not Brides

139. The session was formally introduced and moderated by Ms Mammehela Matamane from SADC Parliamentary Forum, who framed the discussion within the broader objective of translating commitments to end child marriage into tangible outcomes. She emphasised that while many Member States have adopted strong legal and policy frameworks, a persistent gap remains between commitments and implementation. This gap is primarily attributed to insufficient financing, weak enforcement mechanisms, and limited accountability structures. The moderator outlined four key thematic areas guiding the discussion: strengthening political will, assessing current financing trends, presenting empirical findings on funding for ending child marriage, and generating actionable recommendations for stakeholders. She underscored that addressing child marriage requires not only recognition of the issue but also sustained political, financial, and institutional investment.

140. Hon. Hermine Kembo, Special Rapporteur on Child Marriage and Other Harmful Practices, provided a comprehensive overview of State obligations and the mandate of the ACERWC in addressing child marriage. She articulated States Parties' obligations in both positive and negative terms. Positive obligations require them to enact and operationalise legislation through concrete measures, while negative obligations involve refraining from violations and ensuring accountability by prosecuting offenders. She highlighted findings from the African Union's recent work across approximately thirty countries, noting that although many States Parties have enacted laws prohibiting child marriage, these laws often contain loopholes, particularly through exceptions that undermine their effectiveness. She further identified systemic challenges such as weak birth and marriage registration systems, which hinder age verification and enforcement. Importantly, she emphasised the lack of survivor-centred protection mechanisms and the fragmentation of responses across sectors, with stakeholders often operating in silos rather than through coordinated approaches. Hon. Kembo stressed that insufficient and unsustainable financing remains a major impediment, with many initiatives heavily reliant on external partners. She also challenged the assumption that child marriage is solely driven by poverty, noting that the practice persists even in relatively developed contexts, thereby underscoring the role of entrenched social norms and beliefs. Ultimately, she concluded that weak political commitment remains a central barrier, as technical interventions alone cannot succeed without strong political leadership and sustained investment.

141. Ms. Fatou Gueye Ndir, Senior Regional Engagement and Advocacy Officer, Girls Not Brides, presented key findings from a decade-long analysis of global financing to end child marriage (2015-2024), emphasising that while Member States have made important commitments, these remain insufficient without adequate and sustained financial investment. Drawing on data from over projects across major international databases, she explained the distinction between primary funding (directly targeting child marriage) and secondary funding (where child marriage is one of several

objectives), noting that this distinction is critical for assessing the intentionality and targeting of current investments. Her findings revealed that primary funding has been declining over time, even as the number of girls at risk continues to rise. While there has been some increase in secondary funding, she cautioned that this does not compensate for the decline in targeted investments. She further highlighted the scale of underfunding, noting that current levels amount to less than one dollar per girl at risk per year, underscoring a significant mismatch between commitments and resources. Ms. Ndir also pointed to structural challenges in the distribution of funding, with the majority of resources channelled through international organisations rather than directly to local actors, and a concentration of funding in a limited number of high-prevalence countries. She concluded by stressing that international funding should complement, rather than replace, domestic investment, calling for costed national action plans with clear and transparent budget allocations to strengthen accountability and ensure that commitments translate into measurable impact.

142. Hon. Wilson Almeida Adão, Special Rapporteur on Investment and Budgeting for Children, focused on the critical role of child-sensitive budgeting in eliminating child marriage, situating his analysis within the framework of Agenda 2040 aspirations. He argued that the eradication of child marriage requires not only legal prohibition but also adequate and sustained financial investment across sectors, including education, health, and social protection. He linked child marriage to broader structural issues such as school dropout, poverty, and lack of access to basic services, noting that insufficient investment in these areas exacerbates vulnerability. He stressed that States Parties must prioritise long-term, sustainable financing rather than short-term or project-based interventions. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of social protection systems, school feeding programmes, and public awareness initiatives in addressing root causes. Hon. Wilson also underscored the role of civil society organisations in monitoring human rights violations and advocating for change. He called for strengthened collaboration between the Committee, Member States, and regional and international actors to ensure coherent and effective implementation of policies. He concluded with a broader reflection on the need for Africa to move beyond persistent structural challenges and prioritise the holistic development of children as a foundation for future progress.

143. Ms. Sally Ncube, Regional Representative for Southern Africa, Equality Now, focused on the disconnect between existing accountability mechanisms and their practical effectiveness. She noted that while numerous oversight structures exist at national, regional, and international levels, they are often fragmented, under-resourced, and lacking coordination, resulting in incomplete monitoring of progress. She emphasised the need to move beyond project-based approaches and adopt systemic, long-term strategies that prioritise allocation, expenditure, and measurable impact. Existing mechanisms such as parliamentary committees, auditor general offices, national human rights institutions, and regional frameworks were identified as critical but underutilised tools for accountability. She concluded by stressing that commitments must be matched with courage and investment, noting that financial accountability is central to achieving meaningful progress in ending child marriage and provided recommendations to the Committee and other stakeholders:

- Support Member States to establish binding commitments for adequate financing, including clear and dedicated budget lines for ending child marriage.
- Promote increased domestic financing and reduce reliance on external donors.

- Develop and implement multisectoral investment plans, alongside regular public expenditure reviews of child protection budgets.
- Encourage alignment of donor funding with national accountability frameworks and priorities.
- Establish inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms and strengthen platforms for child participation in budgeting processes.
- Introduce simplified and accessible budget frameworks to enable broader public and child engagement.
- Require integration of child marriage financing indicators into State Party reporting processes.
- Develop a continental financing tracker to monitor and compare investments across Member States.
- Strengthen civil society participation and ensure access to information for effective budget oversight.
- Institutionalise follow-up mechanisms that centre children's voices within accountability frameworks.

144. In closing, Hon. Sabrina Gahar, Chairperson of the ACERWC, commended the panel for its substantive contributions and reaffirmed the Committee's commitment to advancing the elimination of child marriage. She emphasised that ending child marriage requires more than normative commitments; it necessitates robust legal frameworks, effective enforcement, and, critically, clearly allocated and trackable financial resources. She stressed that State obligations are binding and must not remain rhetorical. Without sustained political will and dedicated financing, legal commitments cannot translate into tangible protection for children. Hon. Sabrina called for all commitments to be accompanied by concrete budget lines, actionable plans, and independent monitoring mechanisms. She concluded by underscoring that progress can only be meaningfully assessed when law, resources, and accountability mechanisms operate in tandem. For the children of Africa, she affirmed, there can be no compromise: effective laws, adequate resources, and strong oversight must collectively drive the agenda to end child marriage.

ITEM 21: Presentation by ACPF on Terror, security and childhood in Africa: why counter terrorism must put children first

Presentation by the African Child's Policy Forum (ACPF)

145. Mr. Girma Gadisa Tufa, Senior Technical, ACPF, presented the findings and recommendations of a briefing paper ACPF published in 2026 titled, "Terrorism, Security, and Childhood in Africa: Why Counter-Terrorism Must Put Children First". He noted that a child is more likely to be caught in the crossfire of terrorism and counterterrorism than anywhere else in the world. Children's exposure to terrorism and counter-terrorism manifests in multiple, overlapping ways. They are abducted, trafficked or coerced into serving as combatants, porters, spies, or suicide bombers. Girls in particular face gender-specific harms, including sexual slavery and forced marriage to fighters. When these same children escape, surrender or are captured, they are prosecuted on the mere suspicion of association with terrorist groups, detained in military barracks or adult prisons, and denied access to legal

representation, psychosocial care, and family contact. This double victimisation is one of the gravest child rights crises of our time. Prevailing counter-terrorism responses in many African states have largely failed to distinguish between children and adult combatants, often criminalizing children and subjecting them to adult-centric punitive justice systems.

146. Mr. Girma emphasised that African states, while obligated and entitled to protect their security, have a parallel duty to ensure that counter-terrorism frameworks are not implemented at the expense of children's rights. He further noted that most counter-terrorism frameworks lack age-specific provisions or procedures for processing children within the justice system, resulting in children being processed under adult criminal justice procedures. National counter-terrorism regimes continue to rely on punitive, security-driven approaches that expose children to arbitrary arrest, military detention, trauma and long-term exclusion.

147. He further highlighted the recommendations the briefing paper puts forward for enhanced protection of children in counter-terrorism measures in Africa. These include:

- Establishing and implementing handover protocols to ensure immediate screening, rehabilitation and reintegration with a particular focus on community-based reintegration.
- Strengthening security sector capacity for child-sensitive operations, including by integrating children's rights and child protection norms in the military education and training protocols.
- Embedding child-specific safeguards into counter-terrorism laws and procedures.
- Strengthen regional and continental oversight and coordination.
- ACERWC should develop guidelines to assist States in ensuring that their counter-terrorism measures fully respect and protect children's rights. The development of such guidelines should be preceded by undertaking a comprehensive continental study on the issue.

148. The presentation was followed by rich reflections from the ACERWC members, Member States and civil society organizations where they underscored the delicate yet serious nature of the issue of terrorism in Africa, the need to differentiate between children affected by conflict and those affected by terrorism, as well as the importance of addressing the gender dimension in dealing with the impact of counter-terrorism measures. The role of digital technologies in radicalisation, the need for increased investment in prevention measures that address the root causes of children's association with terrorist groups and most importantly, the urge to move from only security approach to counter-terrorism to child-rights based approach.

ITEM 22: Presentation by Save the Children on the Guidance on How to Environment and Climate Change Issues in the Reporting Cycle on the ACRWC

149. Mr. Solomon Gezahegne, representative of Save the Children, delivered a presentation on Guidelines on the integration of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) in Civil Society Alternative reports on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and the Committee's recommendations. The presentation highlighted that the current global environmental and climate crises, manifested through environmental degradation, pollution, and biodiversity loss, have direct and indirect consequences on the enjoyment of children's rights as protected under the ACRWC. Mr Gezahegne emphasized that environmental

and climate change impacts affect a wide range of children's rights, including the rights to survival, development, protection, and participation.

150. He noted that children are disproportionately affected due to their physical and cognitive vulnerability, their dependence on adult support systems, and their limited ability to influence decision-making processes. While African children contribute the least to the causes of environmental and climate change, they bear a heavier burden as these crises deepen inequalities, intensify intergenerational injustice, and expose children to heightened risks. In this context, ECC was presented as a central child rights issue in Africa requiring urgent and coordinated action. The presentation further explained that the guidance on integrating ECC into CSO alternative reporting was developed in response to requests from CSOs seeking practical tools to strengthen their engagement with the ACERWC reporting and follow-up process. He further noted that the guidance was prepared within the ACRWC monitoring and reporting framework and was informed by key ACERWC documents as well as State Party and CSO alternative reports. Its development was described as a collaborative process grounded in co-creation, experience-based case studies, piloting, and extensive consultation. Over 100 individuals from 50 organisations across Africa reportedly contributed to the process.

151. In outlining the substance of the guidance, he explained that it provides a comprehensive step-by-step framework covering the full ACERWC monitoring and reporting cycle. The guidance begins by clarifying the links between ECC and children's rights, the mandate of the ACERWC, and State obligations under the ACRWC and related frameworks. It then provides practical direction on planning, building partnerships, collecting data, ensuring meaningful child participation, drafting and submitting reports, and engaging in pre-session dialogues. The guidance also addresses follow-up advocacy and monitoring, demonstrating how CSOs and children can use the Committee's concluding observations to strengthen accountability and promote policy reform at national level. Throughout the guidance, tools, examples, case studies, and relevant links are provided to support evidence-based reporting and sustained advocacy.

152. In concluding the intervention, Mr. Gezahegne called on the Committee to promote the systematic inclusion of environment and climate change considerations in both State Party and CSO reporting, including by incorporating ECC requirements into reporting guidelines. The Committee was also urged to develop or adopt dedicated ECC review tools to strengthen its assessment of reports and improve the quality of concluding observations and recommendations. Additionally, the representative encouraged the Committee to develop technical guidance for State Parties on integrating ECC into reporting processes, which would also contribute to strengthening the capacity of CSOs and national stakeholders. Finally, Save the Children requested the Committee to endorse and promote the guidance as a reference tool to support CSO alternative monitoring and reporting under the ACRWC.

ITEM 23: Consideration of Complementary Report on the First Periodic Report of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

153. The Committee considered and deliberated on the complementary report on the first periodic Report of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. The State Party's Periodic Report will be considered during the 48th Ordinary Session

ITEM 24: Consideration of Complementary Report on the First Periodic Report of the Republic of The Gambia

154. The Committee considered and deliberated on the complementary report on the Initial Report of the Republic of The Gambia. The State Party's Periodic Report will be considered during the 48th Ordinary Session

Item 25: Presentation of the Budget and the activities for 2027

155. The committee took note of the planned activities for 2027 as well as the challenges arising from limited budgetary resources. The Committee noted that it may be prudent to include technical support to Member States in the programme budget.

156. The Committee further appointed Hon. Roch Etsan, Hon. Wael Abdel-Razek, and Hon. Anne Musiwa to the Sub-Committee on budget.

ITEM 26 ADOPTION OF DECISIONS

Documents for consideration and adoption:

157. The Committee adopted as amended the following documents:

- Strategic Plan of the ACERWC 2026-2028
- Resolution on the Establishment of a Working Group on Communications
- Guidelines on Advisory Opinion
- Guiding Note on Standards for Girls' Rights in Africa

158. The Committee deferred the adoption of the following documents to the next session:

- General Comment on Article 28 with a view to undertake more consultations and explore the possibility of holding a validation workshop.
- Agenda 2040 Implementation Assessment Report to allow the incorporation of responses from States and comments made during the Session.

159. The Committee considered the following documents and decided to assign its Members to support the revision processes as below:

- Assigned Hon. Albab Tesfaye to support the Amendment of SOPs for Special Mechanisms
- Assigned, Hon. Wilson Adão, Hon. Poloko Ntshwarang, Hon. Albab Tesfaye, and Hon. Satang Nabanehto support the finalisation of the Code of Conduct of the ACERWC

160. The Committee decided to organise Days of General Discussions in its future Sessions on:

- Violence against children and harmful practices: Navigating the Digital Frontier.
- Children's rights in the digital space

161. The Committee decided to develop the following documents:

- General Comment on Article 23 ((4) of the African Children's Charter.

- Study on Children's Rights in the Digital Space based on availability of resources and subject to the outcome of the Day of the General Discussion to be organised on the same theme.
- Guidelines for Member States on how to integrate a children's rights into their NDCs and NAPs through its Working Group on Climate Change and Children's Rights
- The Second Edition of the Study on the Implementation of the ACERWC's decisions subject to the availability of budget through the Working Group on Implementation of Decisions

Request from Partners

162. The Committee considered and issued decision on the requests received from its Partners. Particularly the Committee decided to get additional clarification and justification on the request to develop targeted guidance to help Member States interpret and apply early childhood rights indicators from the requesting partner.

Pilot States for the Targeted State Party Reporting Procedure

163. The Committee decided to pilot the Targeted State Party Reporting Procedure with 5 State Parties namely the Republic of Angola, Kingdom of Eswatini, Republic of Gabon, Republic of Ghana and United Republic of Tanzania. The selection was taken into account, considering the submission of the prior initial report, the time lapsed from the submission of the previous report, and the possibility of collecting information on child rights issues in the respective States, among others.

Applications for Affiliate and Observer Status

164. The Committee considered applications and issued the following decisions:

- Granted Affiliate Status to the NHRI of the Republic of Cabo Verde
- Granted observer status to *Inclusion Africa*, based in Kenya
- To request additional information from the Zambia National Traditional Counsellors Association on their activities and objectives on child rights
- To finalise the consideration of the application of Youth Volunteers Chad and communicate the outcome through the Secretariat

Assignment of Members in Special Mechanisms

165. The Committee assigned its members as Country, Special Rapporteurs, Members to its Working Groups; and Chairpersons to Working Groups as follows:

Name	Country Rapporteur	Thematic Rapporteur
Hon. Sabrina Gahar	Djibouti, Libya, Tunisia, Chad, Madagascar	Special Rapporteur on Children on the Move
Hon. Ghislain Roch Etsan	Guinea, Burundi, Mauritania, Togo, Gabon	Special Rapporteur on Child Participation
Hon. Poloko Nuggert Ntshwarang	South Africa, Lesotho, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia	Special Rapporteur on Education
Hon. Robert Nanima	Nigeria, Malawi, Eswatini,	Special Rapporteur on Children in

	Namibia, Sudan	Conflict Situations
Hon. Satang Nabaneh	Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Zambia, Egypt	Special Rapporteur on Violence against Children
Hon. Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing	Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic	Special Rapporteur on Child marriage and Other Harmful Practices
Hon. Wael Abel-Razek	Morocco, Algeria, Comoros, Senegal, Benin	Special Rapporteur on Health
Hon. Albab Tesfaye	Zimbabwe, Gambia, Ghana, Republic of Congo, Niger	Special Rapporteur on Birth Registration and Nationality
Hon. Anne Musiwa	Somalia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Uganda and Seychelles	Special Rapporteur on Children without Parental Care
Hon. Wilson de Almeida Adão	Mozambique, Sao-Tome and Principe, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea	Special Rapporteur on Investment and Budgeting for Children
Hon. Joseph Sunday Sinnah	Cameroon, Liberia, Mauritius, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic	Special Rapporteur on Child Justice

Working Group	Members
Working Group on Children with Disabilities	Hon Anne Musiwa- Chairperson of the Working Group
	Hon. Sabrina Gahar
	Hon. Wael Abdel-Razek
Working Group on Business and Children's Rights	Hon. Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing- Chairperson of the Working Group
	Hon. Joseph Sunday Sinnah
	Hon. Wilson de Almeida Adão
Working Group on Climate Change and Children's Rights	Hon. Poloko Nuggert Ntshwarang- Chairperson of the Working Group
	Hon. Ghislain Roch Etsan
	Hon. Satang Nabaneh
Working Group on Implementation of Decisions	Hon. Robert Nanima- Chairperson of the Working Group
	Hon. Albab Tesfaye

	Hon. Ghislain Roch Etsan
Working Group on Communications	Hon. Wilson de Almeida Adão- Chairperson of the Working Group
	Hon. Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing
	Hon. Satang Nabaneh
	Hon. Robert Nanima

Consideration of State Party Reports

166. The Committee decided to consider the Initial State Party Report of the State of Libya and the First Periodic Report of the Arab Republic of Egypt without complementary reports.

167. The Committee also deliberated on the possibility of considering reports from NHRIs with affiliate status and suggested for the Secretariat to develop a proposal on procedures to materialise the same.

Next session date

168. The Committee decided to hold its 48th Ordinary Session on 14-24 October 2026.

Adoption of Report

169. The Committee adopted as amended the report of its 47th Session pending the incorporation of its inputs within two weeks.

ITEM 27: Consideration of pending communications

Consideration of Pending Communications

170. The Committee deliberated and adopted as amended decision on:

- The Merit of Communication No 023/Com/005/2022 submitted by *Incorporated Trustees of ISH-61 Human Rights & Social Justice Initiative, Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa, and The Centre for Human Right, University of Pretoria against the Federal Republic of Nigeria*
- The Merits of Communication No: 0019/COM/001/2022 *Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Mr. Solomon Joojo Cobbinah (On Behalf of School-Girls Living in Villages Along the River Offin in the Ashanti Region of Ghana) v The Republic of Ghana*
- The Admissibility of Communication No: 0027/COM/002/2025 *Committee for Justice Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and Sinai Foundation for Human Rights (on behalf of Bahaa El-Din Fathy Mohamed Maher Ismail Khalil) v The Arab Republic of Egypt*

ITEM :28 CLOSING

171. Hon Sabrina Gahar, the Chairperson of the Committee started her closing remarks by extending her sincere appreciation to Members of the Committee for the rigor that marked the deliberations during the session. She highlighted the constructive

dialogues engaged in during the consideration of the State Party Reports of Kenya, Eritrea and Burundi. She also mentioned the interactive engagements during the complimentary reports received from CSOs from the Gambia and Mauritania. Hon Gahar called for the continued spirit of collaboration in ensuring the improved quality of life of children in Africa. She appreciated all the participants for their active engagement and participation and thanked the Secretariat and others who supported the successful convening of the Session. The Chairperson informed that the 48th Ordinary Session will be held on 14-24 October 2026 and declared the 47th Ordinary session officially closed.