



Report of Workshop on Popularization of Agenda 2040 and Cross Border Issues affecting Children in the East African Community

1.0. Background

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2015 developed Africa's Agenda for Children 2040, otherwise known as Agenda 2040. The Agenda was developed during the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which aimed at assessing the situation of children's rights in Africa in the 25 years following the adoption of the Charter with a view of **'looking behind to look forward'**. Based on the findings of the assessment during the conference, Agenda 2040 was developed to set aspirations for African countries which will be implemented and achieved in the next 25 years of the Charter. The Agenda sets 10 main aspirations in the area of effective continental framework, child friendly legal and institutional system, birth registration, survival and health, education, access to basic necessities, violence against children, child sensitive justice system, armed conflict, and child participation.

A two-day workshop organized by African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) and hosted by the East African Community (EAC) was held in Arusha, Tanzania on 23rd and 24th October 2018. The workshop was part of a series of workshops planned to take place in all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Participants of this workshop included representatives of the Partner States, representatives from the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare (ACERWC), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the EAC and other stakeholders in the sub-region. The workshop was geared towards popularizing Agenda 2040, and also identifying main priorities, challenges, and possible strategies on the implementation of the Agenda. It also aimed at identifying cross border issues in the EAC in relation to children's rights and the aspirations of the Agenda.

The specific objectives of the popularization of Agenda 2040 in the EAC included:

- a) enhancing awareness and knowledge about Agenda 2040 among the Secretariat of EAC and the respective Partner States;
- b) creating a sense of ownership of Agenda 2040 in the EAC;
- c) identifying priorities, challenges and worrying trends in the EAC taking into consideration the specific and peculiar context of the EAC region;
- d) identifying cross-border issues affecting children's rights in the EAC to better inform areas of collaboration and joint activities in the implementation of Agenda 2040;

- e) encouraging the EAC to engage their Partner States on the Agenda;
- f) ensuring that EAC join hands with the ACERWC in monitoring the implementation of the Agenda in States by using their legislative and institutional mechanisms; and
- g) ensuring that EAC child rights focused activities are aligned with Agenda 2040 for integrated action in the continent.

2.0. Welcome Remarks

The workshop was opened by Dr. Clement Mashamba who is a member of ACERWC and Solicitor General in the United Republic of Tanzania. In his opening remarks, Dr. Mashamba briefly shared the background of how Agenda 2040 came to be and its purpose. He further shared that commitment to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) is growing amongst member states and Agenda 2040 takes the Charter further by identifying 10 aspirations to work towards to uphold children's rights. He shared that while progress has been made towards the fulfillment of children's rights, there are still serious violations taking place on the Continent. Violence Against Children (VAC) poses a great threat to progress for children. Child marriage remains a problem in most of the EAC Partner States and this affects girls progress and wellbeing. Mr. Mashamba shared that 15 out of 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are based in Africa making it an important issue to address on the Continent. He further noted that there are a number of cross border issues affecting particular groups of children such as refugee children, children involved in trafficking, children without parental care and many others. Such issues need to be addressed in a coordinated way amongst Partner States and all the concerned stakeholders. He hoped that the workshop would be the starting point of efforts and strategies that will enable Partner States to work together on the various issues affecting children. Dr. Mashamba informed the workshop that the ACERWC plans to undertake a continental study/mapping of children on the move in the continent and cross border issues affecting children. This study will provide information that will inform the work going forward in the various REC's. Dr. Mashamba ended his speech with a vote of thanks to the EAC Secretariat for hosting the workshop, as well as giving thanks to GIZ, Save the Children and Plan International for their financial and technical support. He thanked all participants for making the time and their participation and concluded his remarks by wishing all a fruitful workshop.

On behalf of the Director Social Sectors at the EAC Secretariat, Mr. Stephen Niyonzima, the Principal Labour and Employment Officer, welcomed all participants to the EAC Headquarters in Arusha. Mr. Niyonzima extended his gratitude to the ACERWC and Stakeholders for choosing the EAC to initiate the series of workshops on popularizing of the Agenda 2040 and cross border issues affecting children. He noted that children constitute the biggest population group in the EAC and it was therefore vital that governments adequately invest in their survival, optimum development and wellbeing. He informed the meeting that the EAC is currently implementing the Common Market Protocol that provides for the free movement of goods, services and people across East Africa. He however noted that in the process of movement of persons, labor and goods in the EAC, vulnerable groups such as women and especially children are affected by

various cross border issues, some which are injurious to their health and wellbeing. Children are vulnerable to abuses that are worsened by insecurity, HIV and conflict. Children experience neglect, exploitation, trafficking, family separation, early marriage and harmful cultural practices that significantly affects their development. He noted that the EAC recognizes the importance of investing in children and protecting them and therefore have adopted policies to address children's issues. The EAC child and youth policies provide a framework for harmonizing laws and policies and address children's issues across borders. One of the main challenges is that when children cross borders and their rights are violated, it is unclear which law prevails. There is a need to harmonize laws across the EAC Partner States so that children can be protected by these laws. It is only through working with policy makers and other stakeholders that region can ensure that children are safe and can thrive. He further emphasized that within the EAC and in Africa as a whole, services targeted at children should be prioritized and enabling environments ensured through strong child protection systems that aim to extend love and protection so that we can ensure their development. Mr. Niyonzima concluded his remarks by calling upon the African Union in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities to establish mechanisms for the protection of Children across the different borders and within the East African Community.

3.0. Presentations and discussions on Agenda 2040

3.1. Presentation on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) – Samrawit Getaneh and Ayelaw Getachew Asseffa

The focus of the presentation, as introduced by Mr. Ayelaw Getachew, was ensure that the ACERWC and all participants would build relationships between themselves and other key actors in the EAC to promote and fulfill children's rights. He emphasised the importance of having a harmonised, structured and coordinated response to the issues that affect children on the African Continent and particularly in the East African Community.

Ms. Samrawit Getaneh presented an overview of the Charter and the ACERWC as well as the prominent child rights issues within the EAC. She explained that the Charter was adopted in 1990 and eventually came into force in 1999. It was created to address omissions and gaps in the process and content of the UNCRC. Currently it has been ratified by 48 countries on the Continent. The presentation shared the four cardinal principles underpinning the African Charter and explained there is more of an emphasis on Article 4 – The Best Interests of the Child. The Charter recognizes the evolving capacity of children and also while it gives children rights it also states they have responsibilities.

The ACERWC comprises of 11 experts across the Continent that serves as the monitoring mechanism. Their role is: 1. Consideration of State Party Reports; 2. Receiving communication about child rights violations; 3. Developing General Comments to provide interpretation of articles within the Charter. 4. Carrying out investigative fact finding and advocacy missions. 5. Advocating for the ratification of the Charter and

encouraging member states to use the reporting mechanisms to provide information on the situation of child rights in their countries. 6. Carrying out research and studies to help better understand the situation of child rights on the Continent. For example, the mapping of children on the move in Africa is an ongoing study being carried out currently.

Samrawit went on to share recurring child rights issues in the EAC:

- The need for harmonization of laws for example the minimum age of marriage, and criminal responsibility.
- Violence against children such as:
 - Killings, maiming and sale of body parts of children with albinism.
 - Corporal punishment in the home and school setting
 - Child labor and the situation of street children
 - Sex tourism, child prostitution and sexual exploitation
- Protection of refugee children. For example, Kenya hosts a large number of refugees including children
- Trafficking in children
- Access to high quality health care and education for all children
- Harmful traditional practices that violate children's rights
- Radicalization of children into extremist groups

3.2. Plenary Discussion:

During the consideration of the presentation and plenary discussion, the following were highlighted:

- a. Ayelaw explained that the ACERWC receives state party reports according to guidelines that covers each of the elements of the Charter. In addition, they also receive complimentary reports from CSOs. Most of the child rights issues and concerns raised can be explained by Government but when it cannot, they are explored further. While we are here to discuss challenges, it does not mean nothing good is happening in the region. For example, we know that the Kenyan Government is trying hard to address radicalization of children. In South Sudan, the ACERWC went on a mission to advocate for the ratification of the Charter. South Sudan has ratified the UNCRC so now we need to continue to push for the ratification of the ACC.
- b. A participant asked about whether recommendations to the States are binding and how the ACERWC follows up to ensure they are implemented. It was explained that when recommendations are made, there is follow up to see if have been followed. The state parties have to respond in 180 days about what they have done. If the Committee is satisfied, then no further action is taken; If not satisfied with the response, then the Committee may call upon parties to submit additional communication and call the state party to a hearing. The recommendations of the committee are not binding however and relies on the goodwill of states to implement. If states are not responding, they will report them to the Executive council for the AU to follow up further. Implementation of decisions is a challenge at all levels – if there is no will from the Government, then it is a challenge. The

ACERWC is trying to come up with a framework to address when recommendations are not implemented. There are examples of Countries that do implement the recommendations and also examples when they do not. The ACERWC continues to work with them to encourage them to implement the recommendations.

- c. A participant emphasized the need to harmonize laws around corporal punishment and the Committee explained this is was something they are advocating for. Another participant asked what the Committee is doing about the case of Indians and citizenship rights of the Makonde in Kenya and the Committee explained that this is not an issue that has been brought to them. They can only address issues brought to them.
- d. On the issue of the ratification of the ACRWC, the representative from South Sudan shared that the relevant documents are with the Council of Ministers since 2016 to encourage the Government to ratify the Charter. It is not clear why it is taking so long; however, part of the problem is the Ministers have not met to discuss this. The ACERWC agreed to follow up with this after this workshop.
- e. Participants were asked to encourage people to use the communications mechanism and submit reports to the ACERWC. They mentioned that CSOs have many challenges with collaboration and often work in silos. Participants expressed the need for the Committee to popularize what they do so people can be more familiar regarding their role and the reporting mechanisms.
- f. The ACERWC shared that they will be doing more of this starting with holding a workshop in December on litigation on children's rights using the AU mechanisms. CSOs are not using the mechanisms of the Committee adequately and it is the same organizations submitting reports and not utilizing all the mechanisms that exist.
- g. Another participant expressed that forums like these are not very accessible to a lot of people and to other CSOs. There tends to be a domination by the larger INGOs and smaller CSOs/NGOs and those working at the grassroots level are usually not invited to be a part of meetings like these. Children's voices and their experiences are not adequately represented through the CSOs in these fora and often all children are lumped under the same category as though they have the same needs and issues whereas different groups of children require different interventions and protections because of their circumstances. We need to think about how we can make these mechanisms more accessible and collaborative so all voices are heard for the different needs of children. It was explained that the ACERWC has a limited mandate so they don't actually consult with children directly. Their main mandate is dealing with state parties and CSOs, so we need to see how we can ensure there is more diversity in the representation amongst CSOs. It is a valid point in that we are addressing children's rights but don't include as much the voices of children who live the experiences. We need to continue to

find ways to gain more of a diverse perspective through engaging different groups and channeling them to access the existing mechanisms of the ACERWC. Currently, there are very few CSOs who have observer status because very few CSOs applied for this. However, a CSO does not have to have observer status in order to report violations as anyone can send a complimentary report to the ACERWC. CSOs were encouraged to apply for observer status.

- h. A participant asked what the strategy is to address cross border issues and whether there is a forum and platform to address the cross-border issues so that report findings are shared with the neighboring member state. This is something that needs to be developed and thought through further.
- i. Another participant wanted clarification on who can make a report to the committee and whether for example media reporting on a violation can be considered a report? This was asked as in Tanzania the media has reported that girls who get pregnant will not be allowed to continue with their education. The meeting was informed that ACERWC had written to the Government of Tanzania asking whether they have put in place this policy but given the ACERWC have not received any direct communication about this as yet it is hard to address it. It is for this reason that the ACERWC have asked for further information from the Government.
- j. A participant asked about the relationship between REC's and ACERWC and what resulted in the decision to popularize the Agenda 2040? The collaboration between EAC and ACERWC on this work began in 2014 where they started to identify joint interest and activities. This workshop is one of the activities that was agreed upon to help ensure that the Agenda is addressed in the EAC. The main purpose of this meeting is to develop a stronger collaboration between the EAC and ACERWC. A draft joint collaboration plan was developed between the two entities which will be shared during this workshop with all participants.

3.3. Presentation on Agenda 2040 to highlight the background, content and monitoring mechanisms of the Agenda - Ayelaw Getachew Asseffa

The presentation began with Mr. Asseffa explaining the important role that RECs play in terms of implementing Agenda 2040. The RECs can take into account the regional realities and further the AU's goals for the realization of children's rights. The presentation focused on the history of Agenda 2040 and the principles and aspirations within it

The Agenda 2040 draws inspiration from the ACRWC and the Agenda 2063 and was developed on the 25th anniversary of the ACRWC as a commitment for the next 25 years to ensure "an Africa Fit for Children". It has 10 aspirations for children:

- Aspiration 1: The African Children’s Charter, as supervised by the African Children’s Committee, provides an effective continental framework for advancing children’s rights. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 2: An effective child-friendly national legislative, policy and institutional framework is in place in all member States. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 3: Every child’s birth and other vital statistics are registered. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 4: Every child survives and has a healthy childhood. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 5: Every child grows up well-nourished and with access to the [L] [SEP] basic necessities of life. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 6: Every child benefits fully from quality education. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 7: Every child is protected against violence, exploitation, neglect [L] [SEP] and abuse. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 8: Children benefit from a child-sensitive criminal justice system. [L] [SEP]
- Aspiration 9: Every child is free from the impact of armed conflicts and other [L] [SEP] disasters or emergency situations.
- Aspiration 10: African children’s views matter.

Agenda 2040 presents the monitoring framework for monitoring these aspirations which requires that every 5 years, progress towards achieving these aspirations are reported on through existing reporting mechanisms of member states. From 2020, the ACERWC will bring together stakeholders to report on the progress but before that, in 2019, the ACERWC will be producing a baseline study on the status of child rights on the continent in line with the 10 aspirations. The baseline will be used as comparison point going forward when member states report to see how things are changing. There will be a child rights summit taking place every year with Ministers where we will discuss implementation of the Agenda. The presenter requested that people present today should take this agenda as their own and implement it.

To start with, we need to push for South Sudan to ratify the ACC as they are the only country in the EAC that is yet to do so.

A question to reflect on is about the importance of submitting reports to the ACERWC. For example, within EAC, only Rwanda has submitted the three reports, so why are the other countries not also keeping up with this? We need to also push for child specific legislation within the region and work towards putting in place strong, independent institutional frameworks that can ensure the effective implementation of child laws.

3.4. Plenary Discussion:

During the consideration of the presentation and plenary discussion, the following were highlighted:

- a. A participant shared that if you look at the registration of births bill in South Sudan it was tabled a while ago and still has not been passed which indicates that there are competing priorities. This could also explain why the Republic of South Sudan has ratified the UNCRC but not the ACRWC? It was noted that there are unique issues in the ACRWC such as use of child soldiers and death penalty that the UNCRC does not address so it is important to push for this ratification in South

Sudan. It was however explained that the application for the ratification of the ACRWC is at the Council of Ministers for South Sudan and hasn't reached the Parliament yet. This may partly be because of poor coordination of the ACERWC with South Sudan about this. The issue of ratification can for example be brought to the council of Ministers so that South Sudan can be held accountable. Can the EAC also help with following up member states not just for ratification but also to abide by recommendations that are made by ACERWC? Even with reporting we can ask the RECs to monitor and encourage countries to report every 3 years so that more Countries submit reports. We need to ensure we abide by commitments that are made and also play an active role in for example the annual child rights summit so that we can affect change. The ACERWC representative mentioned that they do recognize the efforts of technical colleagues in South Sudan to push for ratification of ACRWC. It was suggested that the ACERWC work with UNICEF to push for ratification in South Sudan. Given that UNICEF's presence in member states is strong and the mandate of the UN, we can see how we can push South Sudan ratification forward.

- b. Another participant reflected on how many stakeholders are needed to implement the aspirations in Agenda 2040 and expressed the need to create more awareness about the Agenda so that they can come on board to help implement this. The need to also bring the Agenda to the Country level is important. An example was shared from Rwanda where the ACERWC came to Rwanda for a monitoring visit last year and during this visit spoke to CSOs and the Government. After the ACERWC left, the Government wanted to engage more on these issues and started to put pressure on actors to implement. Reports from visits like these should be shared not just with the Government but also with other stakeholders so that they can help to follow up that action is taken. The ACERWC agreed to do this going forward and also agreed that they will share the report from the most recent monitoring visit in Ethiopia. The ACERWC will be developing a communication strategy on how to create more awareness on the Agenda but also requested that participants promote it in their work and also create awareness.

4.0. Presentations and Discussions on the EAC Child Policy

4.1. Presentation on implementation of the EAC Child Policy and Agenda 2040 – EAC Secretariat

Mrs. Generose Minani, the Principal Gender and Community Development Officer, EAC Secretariat made the presentation. She informed the meeting that the EAC Policy, passed in 2016, is a regional child policy that was developed based on policies that Partner States have on child issues. Given the disparities in how partner states address children's issues, the EAC policy harmonizes regional approaches relating to child rights. The policy also talks about how partner states should adopt this policy. The EAC would like to use this framework to coordinate national efforts to help realize child rights. The EAC has an action plan that has not been adopted yet but will be soon. The role of EAC partner states

is that they are responsible to implement this policy by mainstreaming children's rights in policies, laws and programs. The EAC Secretariat's role is therefore to coordinate the implementation of the policy and provide institutional capacity for the implementation of children's rights.

She noted that the EAC Child Policy priority areas are related to the 10 aspirations of the Agenda 2040. It is important to collaborate with other RECs so that we can move forward together to achieve the aspirations and learn from each other. This is especially important if cross border issues are to be addressed. The hope is eventually that all regional child acts will be superseded by a regional child law to enable harmonization and effective protection of children's rights.

4.2. Plenary Discussion:

During the consideration of the presentation and plenary discussion, the following were highlighted:

- a. One of the key issues that was brought up by a number of participants is how do we ensure coordination and accountability to the Charter, Agenda 2040 and the EAC Child Policy. How will reporting for the ACERWC integrate reporting on the EAC child policy as well? As CSOs, which ones do we implement? If we have all these different frameworks, how do we ensure they don't contradict each other? Are we meant to be promoting and working towards them all? How will all the child policies developed by REC's be harmonized? Is the Agenda 2040 not sufficient for us to implement? It was felt that perhaps the existence of various policies creates extra work in terms of reporting for states and makes it hard to know what you are accountable for. The EAC representative explained that it will be important to engage national government and develop national action plans to uphold the Child policy and the Agenda. The Child Policy is very aligned with the Agenda so the same processes will address both. It was felt there will not be any confusion or duplication as the priority areas in the EAC Child Policy and the Agenda 2040 are aligned. The RECs role is to coordinate and not to implement but CSOs and National Governments will be the ones implementing. An action plan has been developed for the 10 priority areas and within each there are strategies for how to address each area. The EAC will work with the ACERWC to develop harmonized reporting mechanisms for both. The EAC already have a dashboard online where they are tracking the data. A baseline has already been carried out and so the same tools can be used for ongoing monitoring. Additionally, the EAC has developed minimum standards that can be used as benchmarks to measure progress.
- b. It was suggested that the Secretariat of the ACERWC needs to meet with the EAC to make their role clearer regarding the aspirations in the Agenda 2040 and how they can support in the realization of that. It is important to have clear roles on how EAC will engage the partner states when ACERWC makes recommendations to partner states. EAC can be instrumental in domesticating the principles of Agenda

2040 as the EAC processes are binding so can use this as an opportunity to ensure implementation.

- c. A suggestion was made about ensuring children are involved in monitoring the implementation of the policy and the Agenda and that the indicators need to be framed in a way to ensure that there is wide consultation amongst the different groups of children such as street connected children, children engaged in commercial sex work etc. so that we are also measuring how we are progressing in fulfilling their rights. The EAC agreed that there is a need to improve our involvement of children in monitoring and encourage more meaningful child participation. It was recommended that children should be involved in meetings/conferences and workshops going forward. Participants felt there is a need to establish a specialized committee on technical issues and also organize a children's summit annually to ensure their voices are heard. There are other platforms where we can share best practices but we need to make sure the lessons learnt are documented so that they can be used for advocacy and factored in to programming.
- d. Another recommendation was to share the EAC Child Policy with SADC as they are in the process of developing a child rights protocol. This way they can ensure they don't contradict the EAC policy and can minimize the effort in developing a whole new policy.
- e. A participant asked about the progress that has been made on developing a regional legislation for children. This is not something that has begun yet but the EAC felt that it is feasible to develop this. There already is a regional law on customs and currently they are working to pass a regional law on gender. Many people still don't know much about what the EAC has achieved and entry points and opportunities that the EAC provides.

5.0. Presentations on Cross Border Issues in the EAC and the role of EAC Partner States and CSOs

5.1. Presentation on Cross Border Issues affecting children in EAC (considering the Child Policy) - Morris Tayebwa, EAC Secretariat

Mr. Tayebwa informed the meeting that as part of developing the EAC Child Policy, a situation analysis that looked at the cross-border issues in the EAC region was carried out. The analysis identified the following as the most common issues in the EAC:

- Child trafficking
- Sexual exploitation
- Harmful traditional practices – child sacrifices, FGM, child marriage
- Statelessness
- Use of children in smuggling especially in cross border towns

- Unregulated transfer of children from within the region under the guise of inter-country adoption
- Radicalizations, terrorism and extremism
- Cybercrimes – no regional policy or law addressing cybercrimes related to children.

He went on to further share the root causes of these issues in the EAC region, namely:

- Poverty especially in rural areas
- Unregulated cross border movements of young people
- Porous borders and weak regulatory and enforcement mechanisms
- Many orphans, refugees in neighboring countries and internally displaced persons in same countries (due to history of civil strife)
- Harmful cultural beliefs
- Gender inequality

Mr. Tayebwa shared examples of strategies for addressing the different priority areas of the Policy and also discussed some of the challenges in addressing these. He shared however, that the existence of the regional policy, collaboration with the AU and the RECs as well as strengthened partnerships with CSOs were opportunities that would enable implementation of the cross-border issues.

5.2. Plenary Discussion:

During the consideration of the presentation and plenary discussion, the following were highlighted:

- a. A participant recommended that children without parental care such as street connected youth as well as violence against children be added as a cross-border issue in the EAC. Violence against children especially abuse and neglect is both a cause and a consequence of cross-border issues. Children who have experienced violence, often struggle with trauma in the after math and for this reason, mental health should also be considered as a cross-border issue. Trauma is both a root cause and consequence of cross-border issues that negatively impacts the development and functioning of individuals and results in a weakened economy. Trauma has been shown to significantly affect the physical and mental health of people and therefore needs to be addressed in our interventions. If we do not address mental health, we will be investing more in health care and the criminal justice system. It was agreed that mental health is often forgotten in our interventions. REPSSI helped the EAC to develop minimum standards for working with children in which they have emphasized psychosocial issues. However, the EAC stated that they take notice that mental health is a silent issue in policy development so should be considered going forward.
- b. An observation was made that the situational analysis done in the EAC does not seem to consider the situation in South Sudan. It was explained that South Sudan joined the EAC in 2016 so they were not included when the initial analysis that was done. However, it was explained that a consultant had already been engaged and

would in December or January 2019 carry out a baseline and situational analysis in South Sudan.

- c. A question was asked about enforcement and how the judiciary and other actors will take the EAC policy up. There is a need to train the magistrates and judicial officials in each Partner State so that they understand what is required. The EAC Child Policy is still new and so it will take time to create awareness about it.
- d. A suggestion was made to require proper documentation when children cross borders with adults to ensure they are not being trafficked. This is something that the EAC should consider introducing to help with this cross-border issue. As we strengthen children's birth registration this will be addressed as well.
- e. It was suggested that the communication materials that will be developed should also be directed at children so that they learn their rights but will need to ensure they reflect the local context.
- f. A suggestion was made to include cattle rustling, child labor and child domestic workers as cross-border issues. This led to the question of how we define cross-border issues? Movement of children may not be necessary for issues to affect children across borders. Whatever is happening in one country may have an effect in another country across the border. For example, conflict and civil unrest in one country affects the neighboring country even in the absence of children crossing borders. Similarly, children experiencing certain conditions such as violence, abuse and neglect can result in them leaving home and crossing borders to find safety. The cross-border issue will then also be the abuse, neglect, exploitation experienced within their borders that caused them to cross the border in the first place.
- g. It was agreed that we need to agree on a definition of what is considered to be a cross border issue. This will be something that is considered when the ACERWC will be undertaking the upcoming study. We need to look at the issue as a continuum of care of the child and protection of children. Children experience things in their country that can result in them moving across borders but does not necessarily have to result in cross border movement to recognize that something is an issue that has to be addressed.

5.3. Presentations on Countries practices on Cross Border issues affecting children's rights: Challenges and Opportunities – Partner States of South Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda

Four presentations were made by each Partner State that was present at this workshop. The Republics of Rwanda and Burundi did not send representatives so there was no presentation from them.

5.3.1. Cross Border issues affecting children's rights in Uganda: Practices, Challenges and Opportunities – Rose Aaca (Senior Probation and Welfare Officer)

The presenter shared that 55% of Uganda's population are children. Children are prone to experiencing abuse because of their vulnerability. The Government of Uganda has put in place laws and policies to protect children, but child abuse is still a huge issue that we need to continue to address. In Uganda the cross-border child protection issues are:

- Child labor
- Child trafficking
- Child marriages and teenage pregnancies
- Violence Against Children
- Refugee children
- Street children
- Cybercrime and child pornography

The Ugandan government has taken steps to address the above issues by:

- Formation of multi sectoral coordination platforms to enhance implementation
- Uganda parliamentary committee established to address these issues
- A child helpline has been set up
- Laws have been developed to address child protection issues in the country

The presenter shared that the lack of regional/harmonized laws to address cross border issues affecting children's rights remains a challenge that needs to be addressed the lack as well of holding centers for victims of cross border violations and the overall lack of funds for child protection. However, opportunities are the cooperation amongst partner states that should allow for harmonization of laws and good political will in Uganda to develop laws that ensure children are protected.

Kenya's Practices on Cross Border Issues Affecting Children's Rights: Challenges and Opportunities – Presented by Mr. Maurice Tsuma Mumbetsa

The presenter shared that Kenya borders 5 countries in the EAC region and has two of the biggest refugee camps. Millions of children are on the move within Kenya and between borders. The conditions under which movement takes place are often treacherous, putting children, especially unaccompanied and separated children, at an increased risk of economic or sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect and violence. Policy responses to protect and support these migrant children are often fragmented and inconsistent and while children on the move have become a recognized part of today's global and mixed migration flows they are still largely invisible in debates on both child protection and migration.

FGM is considered a crime in Kenya but Kenyans find a way to practice it by crossing the border to Tanzania during the holidays to do this. Child Prostitution is rife and children are trafficked for these purposes as well as for labor. Kenya has very porous borders that encourages human traffickers and migrants to move freely. Children are exploited and forced to beg to earn income for adults. Other cross-border issues are cyber-crime

especially for pedophilia and children being used to traffic drugs across borders. Other cross border issues are: Sexual abuse especially in charitable institutions where visitors and staff abuse children. Parents allowing their children to engage in commercial sex work especially in the Coastal areas where visitors sexually abuse them.

Some of the challenges in addressing these cross-border issues have been: the lack of proper systems and referral mechanisms that result in people not knowing where to refer children's cases to. What makes things more challenging is that children's matters are handled differently within regions in Kenya. There is a lack of information sharing or centralized databases relating to children and law enforcement officers don't share information with stakeholders and relevant staff within their department. Kenya does however have opportunities that it can build on to address cross border issues. An example is the establishment of one stop border control points that ensures more security and checks as well as enhanced border patrols. There is a requirement now that the Director of Children's services in Kenya must provide a letter of no objection for a child to leave the Country which has helped to minimize trafficking. The establishment of a Child Protection team that brings together various stakeholders to discuss and address issues relating to children within Kenya has also helped with coordination and implementation. There is also a forum that has been set up to address cross border issues.

The presenter concluded by saying that Kenya has beautiful laws, guidelines and policies but sometimes these are not implemented. There is a cybercrimes unit at the Police where there is an officer to address children's issues and trainings have been provided but there are still challenges with implementation.

Tanzania's Practices on Cross Border Issues Affecting Children's Rights: Challenges and Opportunities – Presentation by Mr. Kabyemela S. Lushagara

The presenter shared that Tanzania has similar cross border issues affecting children. Tanzania is committed to the protection of children's rights as demonstrated by their ratification of both the UNCRC and the ACC, children are mentioned in Tanzania's constitution and several laws have been enacted including anti trafficking laws, the Law of the Child Act, the Disabilities act etc. There is also a five-year national plan to end Violence Against Children and Women.

Tanzania shares eight borders with its neighbors. While from an economic perspective it is a blessing, from a child rights perspective, it is a challenge. Political instability and conflict in neighboring countries of Rwanda, Burundi and Congo affect Tanzania.

The main way that Tanzania has tried to address cross border issues is by enacting legislation and providing training to the Police for example on recognizing trafficking, strengthening the child justice system and providing legal aid. Efforts are being made to increase birth registration in collaboration with UNICEF. Additionally, there is a cybercrime unit and Gender and Children's Desks that addresses children's issues. While these efforts are commendable, there is still a lot to be done to protect children. There are still problems with harmonization of laws to address the cross-border issues affecting

children and within the country there is not very much awareness about the laws so implementation is a challenge.

South Sudan's Practices on Cross Border Issues Affecting Children's Rights: Challenges and Opportunities – Presentation by Mrs Mariam Betty Okech

The presenter shared that South Sudan has a high rate of child marriage with 30% of girls marrying before the age of 15 years. Only 6.2% of girls finish secondary school and there are high rates of early pregnancies. This poses a lot of problems for children. Additionally, the ongoing conflict and displacement of persons is an issue that hinders the achievement of the rights of the children. There are many refugees in Country and also across borders. S. Sudan has a huge problem with unaccompanied children and orphans. The impact of the conflict has resulted in the weakening of institutions and rule of law. While the Government has put in place a Child Act and other policies to support and protect children there are a number of challenges still. One of the key challenges is adequate child protection and the lack of resources for this.

On the other hand, opportunities do exist in the country as stakeholders have been coming together to meet and put plans in place to address these issues. Technical working groups have been set up and there is also a National Task Force to address child marriage.

5.4. Summary of key issues and plenary discussion:

After the presentations, a summary was provided on the key issues that emerged from the Partner States presentations and included the following:

- a. One of the key issues is the implementation challenges across borders due to the lack of harmonization of laws, policies and practices. There is political will in most countries regarding child protection but there is a disconnect between what politicians say and what happens at the implementation level. One question is: are the mechanisms that are being set up resulting in the actual protection of children? How are children that are experiencing abuse being protected and achieving redress and justice? Resources are limited and not much has been allocated towards child protection. In all partner states, children's issues are combined with many other issues and therefore do not get as much priority and we fail to see who is responsible for children. An example is the fact that there is not a specific ministry for children and that these are often combined with health, gender, elderly etc.
- b. It was clearly noted from the respective presentations that more coordination is needed along with the harmonization and that national and regional child protection systems have to be strengthened. However, it is not clear what coordination and harmonization involves. There are many structures that are put in place to enhance coordination, but they are not always effective. Where is the disconnect? If there is will then why don't we see budgets for over 50% of the population? A participant made an observation that many interventions are addressing things from a poverty lens and therefore looking at fulfilling basic needs

but in doing so we are missing out on addressing the other root causes of these cross-border issues.

- c. There was further discussion about the fact that people working in the Ministries and other agencies that are responsible for children's issues often do not have the specialized skills and the capacity to understand what is needed to protect children. Interventions and programs are not always evidence based and having a department or ministry responsible for women, children, elderly, disabilities etc. cannot realistically have experts in all these areas. Why don't we have a designated ministry for children? No budgets are allocated only for children because they are lumped with all these other issues. We need to insist that the ACERWC advocate with RECs that each Partner State has a designated children's ministry. This will enable better implementation and accountability.
- d. A suggestion was made that perhaps the African Court can be used as an opportunity to make binding decisions regarding harmonization of laws and implementation of these for children. One of the main challenges is also engaging the decision makers and building their knowledge and capacity so that they make decisions that are in the best interests of the child. For example, in Uganda there has been some allocation of funding for street children from Government as a Minister advocated for this and now there are fewer children on the streets.
- e. In Kenya coordination is an issue although there are structures in place. Government officers are a challenge as they get transferred and weaken the coordination as you have to start again. There is an info management system in place but agencies are holding on to data and not sharing it so the data cannot be used to inform what is being done and how. There is also a challenge related to a lack of awareness of who is responsible for what. Budgets are requested but we rely on aid agencies to cover these lines and decisions are made in ad hoc way to then re-allocate money to other priorities. Although we take children as right holders we see them as subjects of charity. That is why we see inadequate budgets being allocated for children. We make public statements that we protect children but it does not happen in reality. Sometimes Government officials are the challenge as they don't fulfill their role and uphold laws. Consequently, effective protection of children remains a challenge.

5.5. Panel Discussion of Good Practices on Cross Border Issues affecting Children in EAC – Partner Organizations – UNICEF, UNHCR, EGPAT International, Plan International, Save the Children, and GIZ

5.5.1. Presentation by Ms. Aichatou Tamba from the GIZ- African Union Border Programme

The presenter shared that the AU has a border program in place but very few people are aware of it. She emphasized the need for coordination between the departments within the AU so that cross border issues affecting children are being addressed. GIZ supports

AU in border issues; however, what is being done now doesn't adequately address children's issues in the endeavors that are being undertaken. One stop border posts have been established to address human trafficking and help with data sharing.

Related to this, a training curriculum for border posts has been developed and rolled out but this training does not cover how to manage children. This would be a good opportunity to adjust this training curriculum. GIZ offered an open invitation to the AU department of social affairs to help them to improve the curriculum on how to address children's cross border issues. So far, 350 people have been trained in this curriculum and work is being done to prevent border communities becoming victims to extremism, trafficking etc. People in border communities do not know where to go if they have problems – this is the adults so we are not even considering the fact that children also don't know.

GIZ is making efforts to increase birth registrations of children in border towns. There is still a long way to go to harmonize what is needed across states in terms of children's documents. There is a lot of coordination and sensitization that is needed within the AU and within the EAC to ensure more effective services.

The presenter concluded by extending an invitation to the EAC to help improve the tools and curriculum that they have to include cross border issues affecting children.

5.5.2. Children on the move: Presentation by Ms. Analina Norden from UNICEF - Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office

Children on the move are considered to be migrants and refugees. UNICEF is currently undertaking research in three countries asking children about their protection needs.

UNICEF are working with IOM and Save the Children to address issues concerning children on the move. Child protection hubs have been established to identify and refer children on the move at borders along with safe houses for women and children.

UNICEF has developed a global six-point agenda that is aligned to Agenda 2040. Their focus is on systems strengthening because they don't want to create parallel systems. Efforts are underway to increase birth registration and strengthen family tracing and reunification. For example, in Kenya's refugee camps UNICEF is building capacity to provide case management to unaccompanied and separated children. In Tanzania, UNICEF is focusing their efforts on alternative care to children and Fit Families which provides foster family care for children who are separated.

5.5.3. Good Practices on Refugee Management and addressing Crossborder issues: UNHCR Presentation – by Ms. Elsa Laurin

UNHCR's presentation focused on their work in Burundi and South Sudan. They mainly work with refugees and internally displaced children. Fifty-nine percent of refugees and asylum seekers are children. UNHCR's mandate is to provide protection to asylum seekers, internally displaced and refugee children including providing access to basic

needs and social services when their rights are violated. One of the main challenges is how to access social services for these children within the national systems. UNHCR have found a number of child protection issues affecting children such as family separation, child marriages, low birth registration, and child trafficking amongst others. In UNHCR's experience coordination especially with the various ministries given that children's issues are cross cutting, poses many challenges. They feel that in order to enhance coordination there is a need to look at concrete needs that will have impact on the well-being of the child and identify which authority should be addressing this. A mapping of who the counter part is will be important to then together develop a joint understanding on what the cross-border child protection issues are.

UNHCR feels strongly that there is a need to advocate to include refugee children into the national child protection system. One of the things they plan to do is a mapping on the different legal frameworks so they understand to what extent refugee children are explicitly included. UNHCR is working with the social welfare departments in countries to include refugees into the national system in terms of access to education, health and other social services. Following this initiative, they realized that there are different systems within partner states in working with refugee children. UNHCR has since documented the good practice on how they integrate refugee children into their national systems. A meeting was convened in the EAC where each member state signed and agreed to integrate good practices for integrating refugee children into national systems. It was recommended that the same can be done in other RECs to ensure that refugee children's rights are protected.

5.5.4. Promoting Child Rights through collaboration with Regional Economic Communities: Save the Children Presentation – by Mr. Kennedy Kimani

Save the Children International (SCI) focus has been working with ACERWC and the EAC Secretariat to develop strengthened policies and implementation on cross border issues. SC is a member of the Inter-Agency Working Group on the EAC Child Policy. The 10 priorities in the EAC Child Policy provides common priorities for SCI's work. SCI has been working on cross border harmonization and implementation of laws (priority 1 and 2 of the EAC policy). Examples of harmonization practices is harmonizing the definition of a child so that protection is provided uniformly. Also addressing the minimum age of marriage, child protection minimum standards, adoption laws, child participation etc. When children move from one country to the other, having laws that are not harmonized poses problems with protection. SCI have also been working on strengthening child protection systems as this is a major issue for this region. As much as states have made progress in adopting laws and policies in relation to this, it is not sufficient. It is felt that the EAC states need to have a coordinated response to child protection issues. Another area of work has been in child participation. SCI feels it is important to develop a common framework for child participation, so all children's voices are heard. They are working to develop a child friendly version of the EAC Child Policy, so this can be disseminated.

SCI Further suggests that in order for us to address cross-border issues adequately we should have regular opportunities to share good practice and continually learn and revise

our implementation frameworks. They also feel there is an opportunity to explore how we can work with the East African Legislative Assembly and use the treaty bodies to report on progress being made.

The presenter shared that the African Child Policy Forum is about to launch a report on how different governments are child friendly and what are the good practices so this could be a helpful resource for us all to learn from. SCI is also working on mapping the situation of children on the move which will provide a baseline for us to work with.

5.5.5. Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes in EAC: - ECPAT International Presentation by Mr. Willy Buloso

The presenter shared that there are three forms of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) namely: 1. Trafficking for sexual purposes, 2) Sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and 3. Online child sexual exploitation. There are a number of economic and social factors that contribute to trafficking. While the EAC partner states have made progress in combating CSE, there is still much to be done. The presenter shared what efforts have been made so far in partner states that includes enactment of laws, training for key personnel, development of centralized databases and allocation of funding and human resources. This has resulted in more children being identified and rescued and more prosecutions for such cases. Recommendations that were made to improve and enhance these efforts are: 1. The need for harmonization of regional laws and policies on child protection as regards cross border issues. 2. Better coordination and cooperation among the law enforcement agencies and 3. Call for a regional working group on child protection in East Africa (child mobility in East Africa: studies and data collection).

5.5.6. Advocacy on Crossborder Child Rights Issues: Plan International Presentation by Ms. Jane Mrema

Child marriage affects many children across borders. This in turn affects children's access to education, health and also links to FGM. The key drivers of child marriage are poverty, traditions and customs. Child labor is another issue that is very prevalent specifically children being used in mining, plantations, as domestic help, in the plastic industry. Children are trafficked internally from rural to urban areas and also internationally for child labor. Poverty is again one of the key drivers. Plan International is implementing a regional program on ending child marriage by harmonizing law but also engaging with elders and others to look at what practices result in this. Plan is working with girls to provide access to education, improve their awareness etc. so that they can also protect themselves. Plan works with families to provide economic strengthening and are linking with national child protection systems to address these problems. Plan is taking a multisector approach to address these issues and providing coordination with various actors. Progress has been made in the EAC as all the countries have a child law, but enforcement and implementation is still weak.

Plan recommends that: 1. coordination within CSOs must be strengthened so that agencies are not working in silos and are address the issues holistically. 2. Support

initiatives on improving parenting. 3. Scale up projects on poverty alleviation. 4. Strengthen child protection systems. 5. Improve access to education especially for girls. 6. Work with elders in the communities about harmful traditional practices. 7. Strengthen strong partnerships and alliances in the regions and share best practices.

5.6. Plenary discussion:

During the consideration of the presentation and plenary discussion, the following were highlighted:

- a. The participants concurred that we have great policies and laws in a lot of the EAC countries but a key issue is the lack of implementation. How can we enhance accountability and implementation of these laws so that we are being effective? It was felt that we should learn from good practice but also learn from what is not working. We need to have the courage to look at what does not work and change these practices. Before we start to look at cross border implementation and harmonization, we need to learn from local initiatives within our countries of how to effectively harmonize laws and ensure implementation.
- b. One of the points that was raised is for us to reflect on how the INGOs collaborate with local NGOs especially with regard to thematic issues and also in terms of locality specific NGOs. There are many coordination forums that are established but the issue is joining the dots between the various forums and sharing of information and coordination between these forums. We should not be separating emergency and protection forums as they are all looking to protect children. Local CSOs are working in silos but the big INGOs also working in silos – how do they collaborate? Government does not take the initiative to coordinate CSOs to ensure there is no duplication of efforts. EAC also really needs to collaborate nationally to coordinate the efforts. There appears to be a lot being done, but it is not coordinated.
- c. A question was raised relating to birth registration, in terms of how UNICEF is working with Governments on increasing birth registration as they did in South Sudan? UNICEF is working to raise awareness on the importance of these documents and also enabling access to registration in rural areas.
- d. A question about how UNHCR address the challenges of early marriage in refugee camps was raised. UNHCR work with CSOs locally and Government to address these issues. It is no different from how it is being addressed outside of the camps.
- e. Participants pointed out that something that is missing is the data around cross border issues. We need to look at what the real issues are and address these based on actual data.
- f. Another question was posed about how collaboration between regional bodies and local partners is happening? The EAC shared that they have managed to avoid working in silos by developing an interagency working group which has developed

a joint work plan. The challenge that the EAC has is how to work with local CSOs. The Eastern Africa Child Rights Network can maybe help to bridge that gap.

- g. A recommendation was made to ACERWC that they need to ensure that the decision makers are at the meetings we are organizing. It would be good to improve communication so that we can get the people at these meetings.

6.0. Collaboration and action plan on the way forward on protection and promotion of children's rights in EAC in line with the Charter, the EAC Child Policy and Agenda 2040 Deliberation

6.1. EAC-ACERWC Collaboration Plan

Since 2014/2015 the ACERWC and EAC have been working on developing a collaboration plan. This plan is still being developed and has not been adopted yet. The ACERWC and the EAC would like to get ideas from us on what can be done to enhance this collaboration and better protect children's rights in this region. This plan will be shared with participants after the meeting so that they can contribute their thoughts. The presenter briefly shared the collaboration framework that has 3 major goals namely:

- To formalise, improve and systematise working relations between the ACERWC, the RECs and their Liaison Offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- To enhance the implementation of the ACRWC among the Member States constituting each REC.
- To further strengthen the capacities and capabilities of the relevant institutions of the RECs and constituting states to effectively promote the rights and welfare of the child.

It was recognized that REC's are the building blocks of AU and therefore there is a need to systemize the working relationships so that it is not just about the events that are organized.

The presenter asked participants if they have any immediate recommendations. A representative of Railway Children Africa shared that they are in process of establishing a national youth platform for children and youth living and working on the streets. She requested that this platform is provided an opportunity to be part of the upcoming children's summits that will be organized by the EAC and the ACERWC. While children all have the same fundamental needs, we need to address their specific circumstances based on their experienced realities. For example, street connected children, children engaged in commercial sex work, and child refugees have different needs and so our work with them needs to factor in different approaches while addressing the root causes.

6.2. Way forward:

- a. The ACERWC would like to have an annual forum where they bring the relevant Ministries and the Ministers and engage them in discussions around policy change to advocate for better protection at country level. It would be good to also include

Ministers relevant to Finance and budgeting as well so that agreements made are supported with resources.

- b. There are various special technical committees, but children's rights issues are lost within these. It is recommended that the AU assign a special technical committee on children's rights. To start with, there is need for children rights forums at the regional level to bring all stakeholders together including decision makers to advocate for better protection of children's rights. All stakeholders should lobby for more visibility of children's rights at domestic level which should result in more investment in services and policy and legislation change for children at the national levels. In Kenya, stakeholders have managed to lobby local government to allocate resources to child protection. The national level sometimes think that child protection is not their mandate but we need to make them realize that it important to allocate resources at all levels.
- c. It was recommended that there is need to proactively use the media at all the events. For example, there was need for more media presence at this workshop to popularize what is being done and share the key messages. The African Court has trained reporters on issues specific to justice and monitor how they report so maybe we can emulate this and do the same for our work.
- d. There was also a request to ask the Ministers to have "children's rights" as a theme of the year for the AU. The AU and the ACERWC should think about how children can participate throughout the year so that it is not just based on one event for example the Day of the African Child.

7.0. Closing Remarks:

Dr. Clement Mashamba made closing remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of ACERWC. He thanked everyone for their participation and for the valuable contributions. He requested that everyone continues to provide support especially at the sub regional level to promote children's rights. He encouraged participants to provide input into the action plan and also help with implementation of it. Dr. Mashamba also thanked the presenters for their informative presentations and willingness to accept critical feedback and questions.

Mrs. Generose Minani, made closing remarks on behalf of the EAC Secretariat. She shared her gratitude that this workshop took place as they feel the children's agenda is especially important for the EAC. The EAC's commitment to children is evident from the progress made in the implementation of the EAC Child Policy that also shows their commitment to Agenda 2040. Ms. Minani noted that *"If we don't address this agenda, we will kill the whole region. If we don't care for our children we will not have good leader's tomorrow. We need to have good collaboration to push this agenda. There is a lot of commitment but there are disparities as well so let's work together to address these and promote good practice"*. She called upon participants to address the aspirations and priorities in the agenda and the policy and asked that in future meetings there should be

representatives from the member states of Rwanda and Burundi. She also made a request to the INGOs to work in all the 6 countries of the EAC so that children's rights are protected.

The meeting was officially closed after these remarks.

8.0. Analysis of issues that emerged:

The presentations provided a good starting point on identifying some of the cross-border issues affecting children in the EAC as well as sharing some of the good practices in addressing these. There were many similarities amongst member states in terms of the issues that exist and also the challenges especially around lack of coordination and implementation. Something that clearly emerged is that there is no consensus around how we define what is a cross border issue. Does there have to be movement of persons for an issue to be considered a cross border issue? It would be important for our interventions and efforts to address both the factors and conditions that create and cause the cross-border issues as well as address the consequences from the movement of children across borders. An example of this is the fact that violence in general and violence against children, especially abuse, neglect and exploitation, often cause children to flee their homes and countries. It is necessary to also address how we can prevent and better protect children from such violence and also improve our response when children are violated. Many participants talked about the need to strengthen child protection systems within countries but also regionally. The EAC can play an important role in developing a regional child protection framework. If these systems are strengthened and work effectively, children will be protected from violations of their rights.

In addition to there not being a clear consensus on what is considered to be cross border issues, we are missing data in this area. There is a need to research what the actual issues are and address these based on actual data. It will be important that through this process we also learn from good practice and promote these on the Continent. Efforts to re-invent the wheel should be minimized as this wastes a lot of resources.

A key issue that emerged several times during this workshop is the lack of implementation of laws and policies, the lack of harmonization of these laws and how they impact child rights in country and cross-borders. Participants recognized that many Governments have made good progress in enacting laws and policies to protect children but implementation remains a challenge. A number of reasons were shared for why this may be such as poor resourcing of children's rights, the "lumping" of children's issues in Ministries with many other mandates, lack of capacity and awareness in the sector on the laws and good practice, lack of will and lack of effective coordination, lack of enforcement etc. It was felt that CSOs and Government work in silos and do not always address issues holistically. It would be important to further understand what causes the poor implementation and coordination so that these factors can be addressed. Coordination and implementation efforts should be across all the levels of grassroots, national, regional and where needed, continental.

During the workshop, there were questions posed about the need for each REC to have its own child policy given the existence of the ACC and Agenda 2040. While this is a sign of commitment to implement child rights, having too many frameworks could be confusing and cause problems with monitoring, accountability and reporting. It was recommended that the EAC and ACERWC reflect further on the roles as well as how to ensure the frameworks are useful for the implementers.

There was consensus that more needs to be done to create awareness of these policies but also of the reporting mechanisms relating to child rights violations. More CSOs and individuals need to be engaged and enabled to access these mechanisms. It would be important to find ways to empower children and encourage their participation in various forums at all levels including at the regional level so that they are actively shaping their futures and their voices are being heard.

**Done at Arusha
November 2018**