

## **Communique on the 41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Maseru, Lesotho,**

**26 April-06 May 2023**

1. The 41st Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) was held on 28 April-06 May 2023 in Maseru, Lesotho. The Session was attended by members of the Committee and other stakeholders, including Representatives of children, Representatives of Member States, Representatives of the African Union Commission and AU Organs, Representatives of UN Agencies, Representatives of National Human Right Institutions and Civil Society Organizations.
2. The Opening Ceremony of the Session had remarks from:
  - Children's representatives, Musa Sow, Foday Bangura and Mokeletso Mothakathi
  - CSO Forum representative, Ms. Felistus Motimedi
  - Representative of GIZ-AU, Ms. Sophia Galina
  - Representative of NANHRI, Ms Rosemary Odede,
  - Representative of UNICEF Lesotho, Mr. Deepak Bhaskaran
  - Chairperson of UNCRC via recorded video, Mr. Mikiko Otani
  - UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children via recorded video, Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid
  - Commissioner of Health, Humanitarian and Social Affairs H.E Minata Cessouma Samate
  - Chairperson of the ACERWC, Hon. Joseph Ndayisenga
  - Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Hon. Chief Justice Nthomeng Majara
3. The opening ceremony was followed by solidarity statements from CSOs and NHRIs as well as Members of the Africa Governance Architecture platform, which included presentations from the AGA-APSA Secretariat, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, APRM, AU-ECOSOC, on relevant activities and potential synergies with the ACERWC.
4. The Committee held a Day of General Discussion on the Protection of Children from Drug Use and adopted an outcome statement. The outcome statement is available here <https://www.acerwc.africa/en/article/activity/day-general-discussion-protection-children-drug-use>

5. The Committee considered the following State Party and Complementary Reports
  - i. The Initial Report of the Republic of Botswana
  - ii. The Periodic Report of the Republic Cote d'Ivoire
  - iii. The Initial Report of the Republic of Djibouti
  - iv. The Periodic Report of the Kingdom of Lesotho
  - v. The Periodic Report of the Republic of South Africa
  - vi. The Periodic Report of Mozambique (Complementary report)
  - vii. The Periodic Report of Senegal (Complementary report)
6. The Committee considered and issued rulings on the way forward regarding the following Communications:
  - i. Communication No: 0015/Com/003/2020
  - ii. Communication No: 0017/Com/001/2021
  - iii. Communication No: 0019/Com/001/2022
  - iv. Communication No: 0020/Com/002/2022
  - v. Communication No: 0021/Com/003/2022
  - vi. Communication No: 0022/Com/004/2022
  - vii. Communication No:0023/Com/005/2022
7. The Committee adopted the following documents as amended:
  - i. Study on the Status of Implementation of Decisions of the ACERWC
  - ii. Study on Children's Rights and Business in Africa
  - iii. Study on the Status of Children with Disabilities in Africa
  - iv. Joint General Comment on FGM (pending the adoption by the ACHPR)
  - v. ACERWC Guidelines on Children's Rights During Election
  - vi. Implementation plan of Agenda 2040
8. The Committee decided to grant an Observer Status to the following Organisations the Centre for Child Law based in the Law Faculty at the University of Pretoria and the Forum for African Women Educationalists Kenya. This would increase the number of CSOs with observer status before the Committee to 36. More information is available at <https://www.acerwc.africa/en/networks/csos?page=0>
- 9.
10. The Committee decided to grant affiliate status to the National Council for Human Rights of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice from Ghana, the National Human rights council of Cote d'Ivoire. This would increase the current number of National Human Rights Institutions with affiliate status before the Committee to twenty. More information on the Committee's collaboration with NHRIs is available at <https://www.acerwc.africa/en/networks/nhris>

11. The Committee decided to institute the process of identification of a Presidential children's champion to amplify the importance of the child agenda in Africa.
  
12. The Committee decided to convene its **42nd Ordinary Session 7-17 November 2023**.

**Done in Maseru, Lesotho at the 41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session on 06 May 2023.**