



Comité Africain d'Experts sur les Droits et le Bien-être de l'Enfant
Comit  Africano de Peritos os Direitos e Bem-Estar da Crian a
لجنة الخبراء الإفريقية المعنية بحقوق الطفل ورفاهه



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

CONTINENTAL COMMEMORATION OF THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD (DAC)

14-16 June 2023

**THEME: THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN THE DIGITAL
ENVIRONMENT**

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Day of the African Child (DAC) was first launched by the Assembly of Heads of State of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1991 to be commemorated annually on 16 June. The day is significant as it honours the 1976 student-led uprising in Soweto, South Africa, that resulted in the killing of numerous unarmed students and young protesters by the apartheid regime. The day is, therefore, a reminder of the costly price these children paid for demanding respect of their fundamental rights to education and freedom. Over the years, DAC has also served as an opportunity for all stakeholders and actors committed to the protection and promotion of children's right in Africa to come together, consolidate common goals, and address obstacles impeding the realisation of an Africa fit for its children.
2. As the custodian of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Committee of Experts has been spearheading the commemoration of the DAC since 2002. Each year, the Committee identifies a relevant theme for the DAC and organises and coordinates activities and events to commemorate the day at the continental level.
3. Following on the practice and on the basis of the Committee's recommendation, the AU Executive Council, during its 40th Ordinary Session, held on 02-03 February 2022, adopted **"THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT"** to be the DAC theme for the year 2023 and requested Member States to commemorate the DAC and report to the ACERWC on the theme. (See EX.CL/Dec. 1155(XL)).
4. In collaboration with Members States and its partner organizations, it has been the practice of the Committee to hold the commemoration of DAC in one or more AU Member States by organising various activities and events that focus on issues concerning children's rights and welfare at the national, regional and continental level. The events are also an opportunity for children, Member States, policymakers, organisations, and other stakeholders across the continent working on children's issues to examine and evaluate efforts, policies, and programmes to protect and promote children's rights.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMEMORATION OF DAC 2023

9. The overall objective of the DAC 2023 is to raise awareness on the promotion and protection of children’s rights in the digital environment and to encourage Member States and other relevant stakeholders to make commitments towards the realisation of children’s rights in the digital environment.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF DAC 2023

10. The events marking DAC 2023 will comprise activities geared towards raising awareness on the protection of children’s rights online and advocating for law and policy reform on the same. Children will participate and play a central role in the major activities of the commemoration.

11. The main commemoration will be preceded by a physical two-day training workshop for children on the African Children’s Charter, child participation, the DAC 2023 theme, children’s online experiences, and online safety tips for children. The children will share the outcomes from the training during the main commemoration and provide recommendations to Members States and other relevant stakeholders.

12. The main commemoration will be a hybrid event in the form of a Symposium to discuss various aspects of children’s rights in the digital environment. The Symposium will begin with an opening ceremony, followed by a video exhibition on children’s views about the DAC theme, children’s voices on their experiences online, the launch of the Zambia child participation framework, and reflections from the government of Zambia on initiatives undertaken to promote and protect children’s rights online.

13. An intergenerational dialogue and panel discussions will be conducted, engaging children and relevant stakeholders on various aspects of the DAC theme (**See Table below**).

TITLE OF SESSION	ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION	PROPOSED PANELISTS
Intergenerational Dialogue	Initiatives undertaken to ensure online safety and to	ACERWC, Zambia Information and Communications

	ensure equal access to the internet by children	Technology Authority, UNICEF, CSO representatives
Panel Discussion 1: Ensuring equal and safe access to the internet by children	Responding to crimes against children online; policies & strategies in place to ensure child online safety	INTERPOL; Meta; Microsoft Corporation, International Telecommunications Union- Regional Office for Africa
Panel Discussion 2: Children’s rights in the digital environment: Cross-cutting issues	Children with disabilities and access to online services, harmful practices and children online, the AU Policy on safety and empowerment of children online	Representative of Children with disabilities; AU Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development; AU Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation; Save the Children, ChildFund

***THE DETAILED WORK PROGRAM OF THE TRAINING FOR CHILDREN AND THE CONTINENTAL COMMEMORATION OF THE DAC IS ANNEXED TO THIS CONCEPT NOTE**

V. PARTICIPANTS OF DAC 2023

24. The commemoration will bring together representatives of children from across the continent, members of the ACERWC, representatives of Member States from the relevant Ministries, representatives of AU organs, UN agencies, Partner Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, business enterprises, academia, and other relevant stakeholders.

VI. OUTCOME STATEMENT

25. The commemoration will be concluded with the adoption and issuing of an outcome statement. The outcome statement will highlight the progress made, the positive gains, and the challenges faced in the promotion and protection of

children's rights in the digital environment. The outcome statement will also outline recommendations for the Member States and other key stakeholders.

VII. DATE AND VENUE

26. The commemoration will be held on 14-16 June 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia. The physical training for children will take place on 14 and 15 June 2023. The Symposium, will be a hybrid event and it will take place on 16 June 2023 ([Zoom access link](#) and password).

27. English, French and Portuguese interpretation will be available during the hybrid event.