

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE VALIDATION WORKSHOP FOR A CHILD  
SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE AFRICAN UNION**

**07 November 2023  
Addis Ababa-Ethiopia**

## I. Background

1. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Committee), according to its establishing treaty, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Charter), is mandated to undertake various activities to promote and protect children's rights in the continent. Pursuant to Article 42(a)(ii) of the Charter, the Committee has the mandate to formulate and lay down principles for the protection and promotion of children's rights. As the Committee is the main child-focused organ of the African Union, it assumes the mandate of leading child rights initiatives for the Union.
2. The Committee recognizes that the African Union Commission, as a regional intergovernmental organization, undertakes various operations for the rights and welfare of children. It comes in touch with children in various occasions in delivering its mandate. Its various Departments have elements of child rights, and they engage with and involve children. Children take part in various workshops, and the Departments and Organs of the African Union interact with children in their country visits, studies, deployments, and other aspects. Moreover, various events hosted and organized by the African Union Commission, such as the Day of the African Child, Girls' Summit and others, bring children together. The ACERWC further notes that in these interactions, there is potential for child abuse, exploitation, bullying, harassment, exclusion and discrimination against children as the staff are in position of authority which creates differential power *vis-a-vis* increased vulnerability among children..
3. Taking such interaction, the particular vulnerabilities of children, and the possible violations of their rights, the Executive Council of the African Union, during its 42nd Ordinary Session, held on 15-16 February 2023, requested the ACERWC to develop a Child Safeguarding Policy for the African Union (EX.CL/Dec.1201(XLII)). The Decision notes the importance of having a policy to protect children with regard to the operations of the African Union and its Organs.
4. The Committee notes the need for the African Union Commission and Organs of the African Union to reaffirm their commitment to child protection which should be pronounced in their various documents, such as code of conduct, staff rules and regulations, among others. Moreover, the Committee stresses that staff working for the African Union in any capacity should be obliged to adhere to the AU's Commitment to child safeguarding.
5. The Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP), therefore, reflects the responsibility and accountability on the part of the AU and its mechanisms by proactively taking preventative and responsive measures and activities that keep children (both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of its programs) in all their diversities safe and protected. It also provides the means to ensure that the AU's interventions and anyone who represents or is associated with it do not cause harm to children in all its various forms, including physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and sexual abuse. The CSP will also articulate mechanisms which allow for easy access to reporting and response by the AU to the allegations made. The Policy also provides principles of redress and remedies that are adequate, effective and efficient systems that are survivor-

centred, upholding crucial principles such as Safety, Confidentiality, Transparency, Impartiality and ensuring the survivor has access to assistance such as legal, protection, medical, psychosocial and material assistance.

6. The Committee notes that the development of a Child Safeguarding Policy for the African Union requires a consultative process whereby the Committee engages the various Departments, Organs and mechanisms of the AU. Therefore, the Committee is organising a Validation Workshop to review the Draft Child Safeguarding Policy and hold consultations with all the relevant stakeholders.

## **II. Objectives**

7. The main objective of the Validation Workshop is to review the draft document that has been developed by the Committee, to identify gaps and to make additions into the policy. and strengthen the main policy recommendations on the basis of the works and experiences of the participants. The validation workshop will particularly focus on the following areas:

- Identification of the main areas where children are involved in the work of the African Union Commission and Organs of the African Union;
- Identification of the main aspects of child safeguarding and child protection that should be included in the Policy;
- Illustrating ways in which the African Union and its Staff are committed to the protection of children from any harm and ensuring that their right to survival and development is upheld;
- Identification of measures that should be undertaken to ensure safe and effective care of children in the operation of the African Union;
- Providing elements for the Child Safeguarding Policy on how children who are engaged by the African Union Commission are protected from any harm and are provided with their rights to privacy, freedom of expression, and freedom from any abuse and torture;
- Determining the main child safeguarding elements that should be addressed by the African Union Commission and its staff in programming, development of action plans and implementation of activities;
- Identification of measures that should be taken against those who violate the Child Safeguarding Policy; and
- Share experiences from other organisations.

## **III. Methodology**

8. The Committee intends to bring together various participants to enrich the discussions during the validation workshop. Participants include:
  - Representatives from all the Departments of the African Union Commission;
  - Representatives from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACtHPR), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Pan African Parliament (PAP), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); AU Staff Association, AU-ECOSOCC, Peace and

Security Council (PSC), Pan-African Parliament (PAP), African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage, African Union/International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AUC-PCRD), Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration (CARIM), Office for Safety & Security Services

- Members of the Committee, staff of the Secretariat of the Committee and the Consultant;
- Representatives from UNICEF, Save the Children International, Plan International, World Vision International

9. The Validation Workshop will be a participatory and consultative engagement where participants will go through the draft and comment on each section of the Policy. The Consultant who is developing the Policy, with the guidance of the Secretariat of the Committee, will facilitate the discussions.

#### IV. Date and Venue

10. The validation workshop will be held on 07 November 2023 in African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

#### Program of work

Time	Activity	Speakers/Facilitators
09:00-09:15	Arrival and Registration	ACERWC Secretariat
09:15-09:45	Opening Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Representative from the Office of the Deputy Chairperson</li> <li>- Representative of Staff Association</li> <li>- Representative of ACERWC</li> </ul>
09:45-10:15	Presentation and Discussion on- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General Overview of the Draft Policy</li> <li>- Introduction/Preamble/Purpose</li> <li>- Definitions</li> <li>- Scope of Application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultant</li> </ul>
10:15-10:40	<b>Tea Break and Family Photo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACERWC Secretariat</li> </ul>
10:40-12:00	Group Discussion Group 1- Purpose and Policy Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultant</li> </ul>

	Group 2- Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Incidents and Breaches to the Policy Group 3- Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct	
12:00-13:00	Plenary Discussion	
13:00-14:00	<b>Lunch</b>	
14:00-15:00	Presentation and Discussion on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guiding Principles</li> <li>- Roles and Responsibilities</li> <li>- Programming Considerations for Child Safeguarding</li> </ul>	- Consultant
15:00-15:30	- Plenary Discussion	-
15:30-15:45	<b>Tea Break</b>	
15:45-16:45	Presentations on Experience Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNICEF</li> <li>- Save the Children</li> <li>- Plan International</li> <li>- World Vision International</li> </ul>	- ACERWC and Representatives of the Organisations
16:45-17:00	- Way forward and Closing	- ACERWC