

Communiqué on the 45th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Maseru, Lesotho

07-11 April 2025

1. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child finalized its 45th Ordinary Session which was held in Maseru, Lesotho, on 07-11 April 2025.
2. The Session was attended by Members of the Committee, Representatives of children, Representatives of Member States, Representatives of the African Union Commission, and AU Organs, Representatives of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), Representatives of UN Organs and Agencies, and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations.
3. The Opening Ceremony of the Session had remarks from:
 - Itumeleng Tengteng: Children's representatives
 - Ms Felistus Motimedi-Gazangeni: Representative of the CSO Forum
 - Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo: Executive Director of NANHRIs
 - Dr Laila Omar Gad: UNICEF Representative to the AU
 - Hon Commissioner Litha Musyimi-Ogana Representative of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
 - Hon. Lady Justice Imani Daud About: President of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
 - Hon. Dr. Ashebir Woldegiorgis Gayo: 2nd Vice President of the Pan African Parliament
 - H.E. Ambassador Amma Twum-Amoah: Commissioner, Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development
 - Hon. Wilson Almeida Adão: Chairperson of the ACERWC
 - Hon. Pitso Lesaoana: Minister of Gender, Youth, and Social Development, Kingdom of Lesotho

The Session was officially opened by **Hon. Justice Nthomeng Majara**, Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

During the Opening Ceremony, a poem presentation was presented by Hlompho Mokhose, a child representative from the Kingdom of Lesotho.

4. During its seating of the 45th Ordinary Session, the Committee conducted various activities and adopted decisions as below:
 - 4.1. The Committee launched two of its studies namely:

- Study on Implementation of Decisions and Recommendations of the ACERWC and
 - Study on Climate Change and Children's Rights in Africa: A Continental Overview
- 4.2. The Committee held a panel discussion with Central African Republic to advocate for the submission of its initial report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
 - 4.3. The Committee held open deliberations on its Concept Note for the 35th Anniversary for the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Thematic Report on Harmful Practices Affecting Children's Rights in Africa led by its Special Rapporteur on Child Marriage and Harmful Practices.
 - 4.4. The Committee held various panel discussions during the Session including on Children in Conflict Situation, Follow-up on the 1st Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children, Sustainable Financing for Child Protection in Africa, and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) and the rights and welfare of the child.
 - 4.5. The Committee held hearing on the merits on Communication No 021/Com/003/2022, People Serving Girls at Risk and Equality Now (on behalf of Esmart Kenesi) v the Republic of Malawi in the presence of the representatives of both parties.
 - 4.6. The Committee also held hearing on the merits on Communication No 024/Com/001/2024 submitted by Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) (on behalf of ACM) against the Republic of Botswana in the presence of the representative of both Parties. During the hearing, the Parties agreed to consider settling the matter amicably under the auspicious of the Committee. The Committee decided that the terms of the agreement should be finalized in 30 days.
 - 4.7. The Committee deliberated and decided on the way forward of the below Communications:
 - i. Communication No 0017/Com/001/2021 submitted by Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network, Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Centre for Human Rights (On Behalf of Children Affected by Witchcraft Accusations in Nigeria) against the Federal Republic of Nigeria
 - ii. Communication No:0023/Com/005/2022 IHRDA and Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria (On Behalf of Children in Nigeria) against the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
 - iii. Communication No. 0019/Com/001/2022-The Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Mr. Solomon Joojo Cobbinah on behalf of schoolgirls living along the River Offin in the Ashanti Region against the Republic of Ghana

- iv. Communication No 0025/Com/001/2024 African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies on behalf of Mohammed Abdulelmonim Salih Vs the Republic of Sudan
- v. Communication No: 0021/Com/003/2022 submitted by People Serving Girls at Risk and Equality Now (on behalf of Esnart Kenesi) against the Republic of Malawi;
- vi. Communication No: 0020/Com/002/2022 submitted by Lawyers Associated for Human Rights in Africa (on behalf of Children of Jehovah's Witnesses) against the State of Eritrea;

4.8. The Committee adopted as amended the below documents pending the integration of its final comments:

- i. General Comment on Article 11 on the Right to Education
- ii. General Comment on Article 25 on Children Without Parental Care
- iii. Monitoring Tool on Children Without Parental Care
- iv. Guidelines on Reparations
- v. Guidance Note on Reporting on the Rights and Welfare of Children with Albinism
- vi. Amendment of the Standard of Operating Procedures of Working Groups on regular attendance of external experts and the implication of constant absenteeism and non-cooperation
- vii. ACERWC's Code of Conduct for Child Safeguarding
- viii. Concept Note for the 35th Anniversary of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

4.9. The Committee decided to develop a General Comment on Article 13 of the Charter on Children with Disabilities through its Working Group on Children with Disabilities.

4.10. The Committee decided to terminate the Special Rapporteur on Children in Vulnerable Situations and adopted as amended a Resolution for the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on Investment and Budgeting for Children.

4.11. The Committee considered the affiliate status application of the National Human Rights Institution of Tanzania, Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance.

4.12. The Committee considered applications for observer status from the following Organizations:

- i. African Early Childhood Network
- ii. Ahaki
- iii. Fédération Nationale des Associations engages dans le Domaine de l'Enfance au Burundi (FENADEB)
- iv. Child's i Foundation
- v. Nelson Mandela Children's Fund
- vi. Women's Probono Initiative
- vii. East African Law Society

viii. African Institute for Children Studies

- 4.13. The Committee adopted the decision of the Bureau to assign selected Members to work on the development of the new Strategic Plan with the Consultant and the Secretariat, namely Hon Hermine Kembo Gatsing, Hon Robert Nanima, and Hon Sabrina Gahar under the coordination of Hon Aver Gavar as supported by Hon Anne Musiwa.
- 4.14. The Committee deliberated on the request of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights regarding the Tripartite Study on Litigation of Girl's Rights and decided to join and participate in the Study.
- 4.15. The Committee assigned its new Member, Hon Joseph Sudnay Sinnah, to serve as the Special Rapporteur on Child Justice and Country Rapporteur to the Republic of Benin, Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Chad, Republic of Gabon, and Republic of Liberia.
- 4.16. The Committee adopted as amended the report of its 45th Session pending the incorporation of its inputs.
- 4.17. The Committee decided to hold its 46th Ordinary Session from 26 November to 06 December 2025.

Done in Maseru, Lesotho at the 45th Ordinary Session on 11 April 2025.