



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



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

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
----- **Ordinary Session**
February 2025
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS
ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD**

INTRODUCTION

1. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) was established during the 37th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Lusaka in July 2001 in accordance with Article 32 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC);
2. As stated in Article 1 of the African Children's Charter, States Parties shall recognize the rights, freedoms and duties enshrined in the Charter and shall undertake the necessary steps to adopt legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
3. The ACERWC is established to promote and protect the rights of the child and in particular to monitor the implementation of the African Children's Charter;
4. Pursuant to its mandate under the Charter, the Committee has undertaken several activities including consideration of State Party reports on the implementation of the Charter, consideration of Communications (individual complaints), adoption of various documents and other activities as stated in this Report;

Accordingly, the current report summarises the Recommendations and Decisions of the 43rd and 44th Ordinary Sessions of the Committee, which were held from 15-25 April 2024 and 02-12 October 2024 in Maseru respectively, as well as other activities undertaken between January and November 2024.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ACERWC DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD (January-December 2023)

I. THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE ACERWC

1. *The ACERWC is composed of the following Members:*

- i. Hon. Wilson de Almeida Adão- Angola - Chairperson of the ACERWC*
- ii. Hon. Aver Gavar- Nigeria- Vice-Chairperson of the ACERWC*
- iii. Hon. Ann Musiwa-Zimbabwe- Rapporteur of the ACERWC
- iv. Hon. Aboubekrine El Jeri- Mauritania- Member of the ACERWC
- v. Hon. Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing-Cameroon- Member of the ACERWC
- vi. Hon. Robert Nanima- Uganda- Member of the ACERWC
- vii. Hon. Karoonawtee Chooramun-Mauritius- Member of the ACERWC
- viii. Hon. Sabrina Gahar- Alegria- Member of the ACERWC
- ix. Hon. Ghislain Roch Etsan- Republic of Congo- Member of the ACERWC
- x. Hon. Poloko Ntshwarang- Botswana- Member of the ACERWC

II. STATUS OF RATIFICATION, RESERVATION AND REPORTING ON THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACERWC)

2. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Charter) is currently ratified by 51 Countries. Four Countries are yet to ratify the Charter, namely, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Somalia, the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Tunisia. The Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic has ratified the Charter and deposited the ratification instrument during the reporting period. Four Countries have placed reservations on the application of some of the provisions of the Charter, namely the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic and the Republic of The Sudan. Among the countries who have ratified the Charter, 42 have submitted at least their initial report while more than 20 of them have submitted their periodic reports. The following table summarizes the status of ratification, reservation and state party reporting under the African Children's Charter.

2.1. Status of ratification and reporting on the implementation of the African Children's Charter, as of December 2024

Countries which have not ratified the African Children's Charter	Countries which have placed reservation on one or more of the African Children's Charter	Countries which have not yet submitted any report
Kingdom of Morocco, Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Sudan and Republic of Tunisia	The Arab Republic of Egypt, Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Republic of The Sudan and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	CAR, Cape Verde, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Libya, Mauritius, and Sao Tome and Principe.

III. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

3. During the Reporting Period, the ACERWC has undertaken several activities executing its mandate. Though the report focuses on summarizing the outcomes of the major undertakings, it would be essential to note the following activities conducted by the ACERWC:
 - i. State Party Reports- The Committee reviewed and considered State Party Reports from Seven (7) Member States, namely the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Republic of Niger, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Namibia, and the Republic of Zambia.
 - ii. Communications: deliberated on various Communications, issuing rulings on their admissibility.
 - iii. The Committee also considered the CSO complementary report on the First Periodic Report of the Republic of Zambia.
 - iv. At the 43rd Ordinary Session in April 2024, held in Maseru, Lesotho, the Committee met with representatives from Member States that have not yet ratified the African Children's Charter, including the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Somalia, and South Sudan. As a result, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic formally deposited its ratification document on July 31, 2024, bringing the total number of ratifying countries to 51.
 - v. In April 2024, the Committee undertook an on-site investigation in the context of Communication No: 0019/Com/001/2022 submitted by the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Solomon Joojo Cobbinah (on behalf of girls who live in villages along the River Offin in the Ashanti Region) against the Republic of Ghana, bringing to the attention of the ACERWC an alleged violation of the rights of schoolgirls residing in villages along the River Offin in the Ashanti Region.
 - vi. The Committee held a Panel Discussion on the AU Theme of the Year and DAC 2024- Education for all Children in Africa-the Time is Now.
 - vii. The Committee organized various forums on the following issues:
 - The situation of children on the move
 - Children in conflict situations-emerging challenges and proposed solutions
 - Solutions to the challenges of children with albinism
 - viii. The Committee held a Day of General Discussion on 17 April 2024, addressing challenges faced by Children with Albinism and adopted an Outcome Statement.
 - ix. In April 2024, the ACERWC conducted a fact-finding mission in Ghana to investigate allegations of violations of the African Children's Charter.
 - x. On June 16, 2024, the Committee commemorated the Day of the African Child in Uganda, under the theme "Education for All Children in Africa: The Time is Now."
 - xi. The Committee adopted the Child Safeguarding Policy for the African Union.
 - xii. The Committee considered various draft documents including the General Comment on the Right to Education, the General Comment on Children

- without Parental Care and the Monitoring tool on Children without Parental Care.
- xiii. In October 2024, during the 44th Ordinary Session in Maseru, Lesotho, the Committee organized a High-Level Child Rights Forum as a pre-consultation for the upcoming 35th Anniversary of the Charter's adoption and the 10th Anniversary of Agenda 2040 in 2025.
 - xiv. The Committee signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on August 26, 2024, in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - xv. During the 44th Ordinary Session, the Committee also held a workshop on Violence Against Children (VAC) for RECs and CSOs, promoting a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach to ending VAC.
 - xvi. Ahead of the 44th Ordinary Session, the Committee invited Kenya and Mauritania to report on their progress on the Implementation of the Committees Concluding Observations as well as their progress on the Implementation of Communication.
 - xvii. The ACERWC has sent a letter of urgent appeal to the Republic of Sierra Leone on matters related to FGM.

IV. STATE PARTY REPORTS, CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4. Article 43 of the African Children's Charter gives the ACERWC a mandate to receive and consider State Party Reports on the implementation of the African Children's Charter. During the reporting period, the ACERWC has received and considered State Party Reports from the following State Parties.

i. CONSIDERATION OF THE PERIODIC REPORT OF MALAWI

- 5. The Committee considered the first periodic report from the Republic of Malawi on the status of implementation of the African Children's Charter during the 43rd Ordinary Session. The Committee appreciates the submission of the Periodic Report and the engagement in a productive dialogue with the Republic of Malawi, which allowed ACERWC to better appreciate the extent of implementation of ACRWC in the State Party. The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption of new laws, policies, strategies and frameworks as well as the revision of laws that is taking place to ensure compliance with the African Children's Charter by the State Party. The Committee would like to recognize and appreciate the Government of the Republic of Malawi for undertaking several measures to realize the implementation of the provisions of the African Children's Charter through the domestication of its aspirations under the Constitution, various legislation, and policies. After considering the report, the Committee shared the following major recommendations with the State Party:
 - The State Party to enhance inter-agency collaboration and develop a centralized coordination framework that facilitates more efficient data sharing and program implementation across all government agencies involved in promoting and protecting the rights of children.

- The Committee recommends the State Party to ensure that the Charter is translated into all languages and report on the measures taken to disseminate and sensitize citizens about the Charter in its next report.
- The Committee further encourages the State Party to continue expanding training programs for various actors working with children, ensuring they are equipped with comprehensive knowledge of children's rights as outlined in the Charter.
- The Committee recommends the government to implement comprehensive awareness-raising campaigns to educate the public and relevant stakeholders about the new legislative changes and the updated definition of a child.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to continue allocating and increasing financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of the National Plan of Action on Persons with Albinism and the National Disability Mainstreaming Strategy.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party intensify efforts to protect children with albinism by increasing the prosecution and conviction rates of offenders, expanding awareness campaigns, and ensuring the consistent and adequate provision of sunscreen lotion and other essential supplies to safeguard their health and well-being.
- To further strengthen the child justice system, the Committee recommends that the State Party expedite the completion of the upgrades to magistrate court premises, ensure that all child justice courts are fully equipped with necessary resources, and provide continuous training for personnel on child-sensitive judicial processes to better protect and serve the needs of children in the justice system.
- Increase the coverage of the school feeding program to include a larger percentage of primary schools and students, aiming for universal access.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to expedite the process of scaling up the Child Parliament to a national level, ensuring that it is inclusive and representative of all regions, and to continue supporting and expanding children's corners to facilitate active and meaningful child participation throughout the country.
- To further strengthen birth registration efforts, the Committee recommends the State Party to: Establish mobile registration centers and create a sub-district registration mechanism to ensure that all Malawians have access to registration services; and Extend community health center birth registration to all districts to ensure no child is left unregistered, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- Allocate more funds to the education sector to ensure sufficient resources for infrastructure, teaching materials, and support programs.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to develop a National Inclusive Education policy to support an effective Inclusive Education Strategy. Additionally, the State Party is encouraged to allocate additional financial resources specifically for the implementation of the National Inclusive Education Strategy to ensure adequate support for learners with disabilities.
- Put in place measures to ensure the availability and accessibility of basic and emergency maternal health services for adolescent girls including increasing the funds allocated to maternal health and building and equipping of health facilities closer to people.

- The Committee recommends the State Party to ensure that all childcare institutions develop and implement comprehensive child protection policies, continue conducting regular and systematic monitoring of all childcare institutions to ensure compliance with child protection standards and improve the quality of care, and intensify deinstitutionalization programs to reduce the number of children in institutions, promoting family-based and community-based care alternatives.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to:
- Expediate the review and finalization of the Refugee Act to ensure that it is fully aligned with international standards.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party expedite the finalization of pending trafficking cases to ensure timely justice; finalize the development of the national data collection tool for trafficking in persons; increase public financing for the implementation of anti-trafficking laws and policies, and train labor inspectors to identify and report forced labor and trafficking violations.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to accelerate the construction of child justice courts in all districts, continue providing comprehensive training for judges, lawyers, and law enforcement officials on child rights and appropriate handling of children in conflict with the law, and to continue undertaking continuous assessments of detention centres to ensure that children are not detained with adults.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to allocate sufficient resources to effectively implement the National Action Plan on Child Labour Elimination (2019-2025), ensuring that the goals of the plan are met within the specified timelines.
- The Committee therefore recommends the State Party to continue and expand its efforts in implementing comprehensive awareness and educational programs, and to enhance the provisions of services to children affected by substance abuse.

ii. CONSIDERATION OF THE PERIODIC REPORT OF MOZAMBIQUE

6. During its 43rd Ordinary Session, the Committee considered the combined first Periodic Reports of the Republic of Mozambique. The Committee appreciates the submission of the Periodic Reports and the engagement in a productive dialogue with the Republic of Mozambique, which allowed ACERWC to better appreciate the extent of implementation of ACRWC in the State Party. The ACERWC commends the Republic of Mozambique for disseminating information about children's rights at the communal and institutional levels in the State Party, and the incorporation of children's rights content into the school curriculum from the pre-school to the secondary school level. The Committee further compliments the Republic of Mozambique for its efforts in implementing ACRWC, including the revision of the Family Law, which set the minimum age of marriage in the country to 18 years, without exception; and for all the legislative and institutional measures undertaken to implement the provisions of the African Children's Charter. After considering the report, the Committee shared the following major recommendations with the State Party:

- To translate the Charter and other child rights instruments into all other languages spoken by the people of Mozambique. The Committee further

recommends that the State Party take all necessary measures to accelerate the complete translation of ACRWC and make it accessible to all children, including children with disabilities.

- The Committee recommends that Mozambique take a more rigorous approach to address malnutrition, and address food insecurity which has also contributed to acute malnutrition.
- The ACERWC recommends that the Republic of Mozambique ensure that the principle of child participation in all sectors and decisions affecting the interest of children.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party take enhanced measures to ensure broad geographic coverage of birth registration centres.
- The Committee recommends that Mozambique make early childhood education accessible to children from all regions in the country. Additionally, the Committee recommends that the State Party provides quality learning materials and train educators for this sector.
- The Committee recommends that the Republic of Mozambique continue in measures to encourage children to be enrolled in schools, and to encourage the completion of the primary school level, the Committee further recommends that Mozambique enhance its efforts towards building more schools, and training and allocating teachers to ensure that class sizes are not beyond the levels optimal for learning.
- Calling to mind children displaced by conflict in the State Party, the Committee recommends that the Republic of Mozambique take all steps to ensure that the children displaced by armed conflict can continue their education as much as possible. The Committee encourages the Republic of Mozambique to ensure that any schools in the conflict zones are kept safe from parties to the conflict, and to invest in adaptable educational systems to ensure that children can continue learning even during conflict.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party take all measures possible to ensure that all children have access to quality health care services in their region.
- Take all necessary steps to address child mistreatment in families, abandonment, and expulsion of children from homes, which remain the prevalent causes of children being separated from parents in the State Party.
- Create and finalise regulations for alternative care institutions, which are in line with the United Nations Guidelines for Alternative Child Care.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party rigorously monitor and enforce the accessibility standards of the various structures to ensure that persons with disabilities are included.
- Collect data on the effectiveness of the measures it undertakes to address child labour; ensure that systems are set up to monitor child labour in the formal and informal sectors, and to bring to justice all who violate the prohibition of child labour.
- The Committee encourages the State Party to ratify and implement the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa.
- The encourages the State Party to take rigorous measures to ensure the rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of child soldiers into community.

- The Committee recommends that the State prioritise lasting solutions to the conflict, so that children can have a sustainable return to their communities without risk of further violence.
- The Committee recommends that the Republic of Mozambique implement the ACERWC's General Comment 1 on Children of Incarcerated and Imprisoned Parents and Primary Caregivers, by reviewing its criminal sentencing laws to incorporate the consideration of caregiving responsibilities when computing sentences, and to examine the possibility of non-custodial sentences where the person found guilty is a caregiver to children.
- The Committee further recommends that the Republic of Mozambique take rigorous measures to address the root causes of sexual violence against children, including through education and continuous public awareness campaigns.
- The Committee further recommends that the State Party create safe, anonymous, and accessible reporting mechanisms for children violated online, and raise public awareness on this issue to eradicate stigma.
- The Committee recommends that the Republic of Mozambique work through the Central Office for Drug Prevention and Control to collect data on the use of illicit substances by children, and on the use of children in the production and trafficking of such illicit substances.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party enhance its responses to child trafficking and continue in rigorous measures to address the social causes factors for trafficking to continue.
- Then Committee recommends that the Republic of Mozambique take all measures to ensure that the prohibition of child marriage in its laws is respected by all persons in the country and ensure that those who violate the law are prosecuted. The ACERWC further recommends that the Republic of Mozambique collect and provide data on any harmful practices that affect children.
- The ACERWC recommends that the Republic of Mozambique expand rehabilitation services and juvenile-friendly institutions to all regions of the country, and to prohibit the detention of children in conflict with the law in adult prisons.
- The Committee wishes to renew to the Republic of Mozambique the assurances of its highest consideration.

iii. CONSIDERATION OF THE PERIODIC REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

7. During its 43rd Ordinary Session, the Committee considered the combined first Periodic Reports of the Republic of Zimbabwe. The Committee appreciates the submission of the Periodic Reports and the engagement in a productive dialogue with the Republic of Zimbabwe, which allowed ACERWC to better appreciate the extent of implementation of ACRWC in the State Party. The ACERWC commends the Republic of Zimbabwe for the adoption of a legislative and policy framework for the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of children, including: the amendment of the Guardianship of Minors Act in 2022, the adoption of the Marriage Act in 2022, Children's Amendment Act in 2023, Education Amendment Act, 2019, The Cybercrimes and Data Protection Act of 202, The National Disability Policy of 2021 and The National Development Strategy I (2021–2025). After

considering the report, the Committee shared the following major recommendations with the State Party:

- The Committee recommends that the State Party increase its budget allocation and collaborate with other stakeholders based on the proportion of children in the population to guarantee the availability of fundamental social services, such as healthcare, education, and protection from violence, as well as the overall development and well-being of children in all provinces.
- The Committee recommends the State Party finalize the harmonization of the definition of the child in the Criminal Law Code and the Public Health Act [Chapter 15:17] by the Constitution and the African Children Charter.
- The Committee encourages the State Party to persist with public awareness campaigns against all forms of discrimination, establish monitoring and follow-up mechanisms, and hold perpetrators accountable through the justice system.
- The Committee recommends a comprehensive policy to define the roles of junior councils, improve communication, increase funding, and ensure that children's concerns are incorporated into government decision-making. Furthermore, the Committee encourages the State Party to strengthen the good practices of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) in schools across the country, which allow students to have a say in matters such as education policies, welfare issues, and extracurricular activities, and to simulate and practice Government structures and the decision-making process.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to improve the accessibility of birth registration by establishing a one-stop approach for birth registration and certification. This includes removing any hidden costs, eliminating financial obstacles through fee waivers and penalties, enhancing the accessibility of registration centers, and simplifying documentation requirements where feasible.
- The Committee encourages the involvement of traditional and religious leaders in advocacy efforts concerning cultural practices that affect birth registrations, and the promotion of gender equality through registration.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to abolish all forms of corporal punishment in families, schools, day-care centers, and correctional institutions; investigate and prosecute perpetrators; closely monitor and inspect schools, day-cares, care facilities, among others; and sensitize families and communities about the negative impacts of corporal punishment as well as introduce various modes of positive discipline in schools and at home.
- The Committee recommends the State Party expands capacity-building trainings and awareness-raising efforts for its personnel at different levels, prosecute perpetrators, and complete the harmonization of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act.
- The Committee encourages the State Party to prioritize finalizing the National Parenting Manuals and the Alternative Care Policy, and undertake review of its laws and policies on alternative care to ensure compliance with the Charter and the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care. The Committee also recommends that the State Party establishes and strengthens deinstitutionalization efforts including through adopting After Care Policies, leaving-care programs to ensure that children do not permanently stay residential care facilities.

- The Committee recommends the State Party to enhance the capacity of the social service workforce to increase quality of alternative care provision. The Committee also recommends that the State Party undertakes sensitization to encourage foster care, kinship care, and domestic adoption to ensure the provision of family environment for children. The State Party is encouraged to enhance its collaboration with partners and the private sector to mobilise resource for its alternative care programs through sensitization. The Committee encourages the State Party to further enhance its family tracing and reunification efforts.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party, as a Partner State for Global Partnership for Education, upholds its commitment to allocate up to 20% its public expenditure on education, increase its investment in early childhood education and allocate 10% of its education budget to early childhood education in line with the Tashkent Declaration.
- The Committee encourages the State Party to implement the National Disability Policy and ensure that children with disabilities have access to inclusive education. More specifically, the Committee recommends that the State Party renovates school infrastructures and public recreation centers to ensure accessibility by children with disabilities, guarantee the availability of resources like brails, and provide teachers with special education training.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party allocates sufficient funding and awareness raising about the National Disability Policy to ensure its effective implementation through conducting campaigns, providing training programs, and establishing partnerships with civil society organizations dedicated to the rights of children with disabilities.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party develops a database with detailed statistics on children with disabilities and data on various disability categories to guide informed decision-making and actions.
- The Committee recommends the State Party continue strengthening partnerships to improve conditions of living for refugee children, ensure the right to birth registration, identity and nationality of the children therein, and ensure that refugee children do not become stateless.
- The Committee also encourages the State Party to implement a non-custodial sentence on mothers in as much as possible, and when detention becomes mandatory ensure that children staying with their mothers are not subject to imprisonment.
- The Committee reiterates that children of imprisoned mothers should not be kept in prisons, rather separate facilities for mothers and their accompanying children should be provided where children have access to health, nutrition, education, and recreation facilities among others.
- The Committee recommends for the State Party to further expand its economic initiatives that benefit families and create employment opportunities to caregivers, increase resource allocation, strengthen collaboration with partner organizations, and enhance social welfare programs to protect children more effectively from hazardous labour.
- The Committee recommends that the State Party increases its effort to enforce the laws against harmful practices such as child marriage and virginity testing through prosecution of perpetrators; awareness creation campaigns with local leaders, CSOs, and religious leaders; utilising community-based

mechanisms for prevention and reporting; and enhance the capacity of law enforcement.

iv. **CONSIDERATION OF THE PERIODIC REPORT OF RWANDA**

8. During the 43rd Ordinary Session, the Committee considered the third periodic report of the Republic of Rwanda on the status of the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Committee appreciates the submission of the Periodic Reports and the engagement in a productive dialogue with the Republic of Rwanda, which allowed ACERWC to better appreciate the extent of implementation of ACRWC in the State Party. The Committee commends the efforts that the State Party has put in place to implement the Charter and its recommendations on the second periodic report of the State Party including the timely submission of the third periodic report and thereby efforts to comply with the State Party reporting obligations provided under article 43 of the Charter; the merger of the National Commission for Children (NCC) and the National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) into National Child Development Agency (NCDA), heeding to the previous recommendation of the Committee; and the adoption of various laws and policies which cater for the rights and interests of children in Rwanda. After considering the report, the Committee shared the following major recommendations with the State Party:

- With a view to address disproportionately high level of discrimination faced by children with disabilities owing to social stigma that leads families and caretakers to hide and marginalize their children with disabilities. The Committee urges that State Party to significantly enhance community and family sensitization through social outreach programs and the use of various media to eliminate stigma against children with disabilities.
- The Committee recommends for the adoption of measures that systematically target children from low-income families that are most affected by stunting. Furthermore, the Committee encourages the Government to enhance measures aimed at accessibility and the affordability of basic needs such as food and non-food items for children of economically underprivileged families.
- The Committee encourages the Government to continue the various awareness creation initiatives to ensure that corporal punishment is not practiced in all public and private settings and ensure the continued reporting and prosecution of cases of corporal punishment. The Committee further encourages the Government to continue providing trainings for teachers, parents, traditional and religious leaders, community-based child protection committees and police on positive disciplining.
- The Committee encourages the Government to continue the foster care program and ensure its sustainability, to realize its set target that “every child has a family.” The Committee further recommends the Government to strengthen monitoring of foster families through the Child Protection and Welfare Officers based at District level and *IZU* volunteers.
- The Committee encourages the Government to strengthen and scale up the training of healthcare providers and the production of prosthesis and other essential equipment and the provision of orthopaedic and rehabilitation services in proportion to the diverse needs of children with disabilities and to ensure the accessibility and affordability of the goods and services thereof.

- The Committee recommends the Government to design and implement strategies and undertake a coordinated multi-stakeholder sensitization and awareness creation campaign on the prevention of teenage pregnancy and prevention sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents.
- Strengthen measures for the psycho-social, medical, economic and educational rehabilitation and reintegration of teenage mothers and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse.
- The Committee encourages the State Party to continually build the capacity of teachers through pedagogical trainings to increase the quality of education and to further increase the number of staff trained in special needs and Inclusive Education in proportion to the number and diversity of children with disabilities.
- The Committee highly encourages the State Party to continue to strengthen and scale up the school feeding program.
- The Committee further urges the State Party to ensure that no child is left behind due to inability of parents/care givers to contribute in cash or kind and to ensure that all children in schools providing feeding program benefit equally irrespective of socio-economic or other family circumstances.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to significantly enhance awareness creation and sensitization efforts targeting social norms that contribute to violence against children and other cultural and economic determinants of violence.
- The Committee recommends the State Party to identify and tackle root causes that lead children in to street situations and to ensure the usage of a holistic social work supported rehabilitation and reintegration to prevent return to street situations.

v. CONSIDERATION OF PERIODIC REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

9. During its 44th Ordinary Session, the ACERWC considered the First Periodic Report of the Republic of Zambia on the implementation of the African Children's Charter. Following the consideration of the report, the ACERWC issued its Concluding Observations and Recommendations to the State Party. The Committee notes with appreciation the submission of the first periodic report and further appreciates the legislative and institutional measures that the State Party has undertaken to implement the Charter. Particularly, the Committee commends the following measures:
 - ✓ The adoption of the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022 and efforts to harmonise related legislation, including the amendment of the Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act No. 16 of 2022, Marriage Amendment Bill 2023, among others.
 - ✓ The introduction of the Free Education Policy (2022) which has led to increased school enrolment, as well as the proactive efforts to address resulting challenges through community-driven initiatives to produce desks and build additional classrooms.
 - ✓ The implementation of social protection programs, including social cash transfers for child-headed households, benefiting over 2.2 million children, with special assistance for girls to continue their education

Despite the progress achieved, the Committee expresses concerns which are affecting the rights and welfare of children in the State Party. The details of the Committee's concerns and recommendations are explained in the Concluding Observations and Recommendations that have been transferred to the State Party. As outlined in the document, some of the major recommendations of the ACERWC include for the Republic of Zambia to:

- ✓ Speed up revising the Bill of Rights in the Constitution to include children's rights
- ✓ Consistently raise the budget resources allocated for child rights and welfare issues proportional to the population growth and increasing demand, to the maximum extent possible
- ✓ Expedite the full operationalisation of the National Coordinating Committee for Children (NCCC) to enhance coordination on the implementation of the Charter
- ✓ Set up the Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights within the Human Rights Commission and allocate adequate financial, technical, and human resources to enable the office to independently promote, protect, and fulfil children's rights
- ✓ Review the Defence Act Chapter 106 on the definition of the child and ensure that all legislation, including customary laws, that define a child are harmonised with the Children's Code Act and the African Children's Charter
- ✓ Implement the African Union Plan of Action to End Attacks and Other Human Rights Violations Targeting Persons with Albinism in Africa and translate it into a national policy and expedite the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa (Africa Disability Protocol)
- ✓ Adopt a holistic and system-strengthening approach to respond to child malnutrition, stunting, and under-five mortality; scale up the existing multi-sectoral strategy to accelerate stunting reduction to reach children in all 116 districts; and increase access to basic sanitation and safe drinking water, targeting vulnerable groups of children
- ✓ Broaden initiatives to ensure that all children could engage in matters that affect them, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child
- ✓ Strengthen mobile birth registration initiatives to reach children who are unable to access health facilities and take the necessary steps to meet the 50% birth registration coverage target for children under five
- ✓ Improve community-based systems for reporting, responding, and managing cases of violence against children, including children in care facilities
- ✓ Develop comprehensive strategies to address the multiple causes of children in streets, such as structural inequalities and family violence, and implement a wide-ranging social protection framework
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive action plan with clear targets for promoting and protecting the rights of children with disabilities in the State Party
- ✓ Strengthen healthcare infrastructure in rural and remote areas
- ✓ Address traditional barriers to girls' education, such as child marriage and teenage pregnancy, through community engagement and child-

friendly approaches; and Finalise and implement the revised National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage

- ✓ Promptly adopt and implement the Guidelines for National Prosecutors on the Application of the Children's Code Act for Children in the Criminal Justice System and Guidelines for Police Officers for Handling Children in Conflict and Contact with the Law
- ✓ Prioritise non-custodial sentences for parents and primary caregivers, considering the best interests of the child
- ✓ Ensure corporate regulations on due diligence, transparency, remediation, and legal accountability to prevent and address child labour
- ✓ Create specialised units for children in law enforcement and train legal professionals in gender-sensitive approaches

vi. CONSIDERATION OF THE PERIODIC REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

10. During its 44th Ordinary Session, the ACERWC considered the First Periodic Report of the Republic of Namibia on the implementation of the African Children's Charter. Following the consideration of the report, the ACERWC issued its Concluding Observations and Recommendations to the State Party. The Committee notes with appreciation the submission of the first periodic report and further appreciates the legislative and institutional measures that the State Party has undertaken to implement the Charter. Particularly, the Committee commends the adoption of the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA); the establishment of the National Advisory Council on Children; the National Plan of Action on Violence against Children 2021-2025; the enactment of the Domestic Violence Bill, the Witness Protection Bill, and the Child Justice Bill into law; and the collaboration with CSOs and other intergovernmental organizations in implementing the Charter.

11. While noting the progress achieved, the Committee observes with concerns issues which are affecting the rights and welfare of children in the State Party. The details of the Committee's concerns and recommendations are explained in the Concluding Observations and Recommendations that have been transferred to the State Party. The following are some of the major recommendations of the ACERWC that the Republic of Namibia:

- ✓ Enacts and ensures the enforcement of the Recognition of Customary Marriage Bill, the Torture Bill, and the Child Justice Bill
- ✓ Adopts laws to expressly criminalize corporal punishment in all settings and impose sanctions. Additionally, the Committee recommends that the State Party undertakes awareness-raising to sensitize communities on corporal punishment and positive disciplining
- ✓ Develops a new national action plan for children, guided by the Charter and Agenda 2040
- ✓ Accelerates the process to operationalize the children's fund to enable the child protection stakeholders who rely on the fund to effectively carry out their mandates.
- ✓ Fosters the collaboration of the Ombudsman with the Committee by encouraging the Ombudsman to have affiliate status and ensure sufficient resources to enable it to compile alternative reports and participate in the

implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to develop sufficient child rights capacity

- ✓ Sustains and regularly increases budget for children it in line with inflation, ensures strict accountability in the use of the children's budget, and establishes frameworks to institutionalize children's participation in the formulation of the budget
- ✓ Recommends that the State Party ensures the adequate funding and operationalization of the National Recommendation Tracking Database. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State Party ensures that those responsible for treaty implementation and stakeholders working with children are continuously trained to interpret the database and incorporate the recommendations given into their work.
- ✓ Reiterates its prior recommendation that the State Party sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 in all circumstances in accordance with articles 2 and 21 of the African Children's Charter by repealing the legislative provisions that allow for minors to marry where there is consent from children themselves, their guardians, and government officials
- ✓ Investigates and addresses the root causes behind the increases in child mortality
- ✓ Fosters a supportive environment for mothers to enable exclusive breastfeeding, including paid maternity leave, and the promotion of safe private places in the workplace for lactating mothers
- ✓ Continues its birth registration campaigns and target the regions with lower rates of registered children. Additionally, to address cultural naming practices that hinder birth registration, the Committee recommends that the State Party undertakes educational measures to sensitise communities on the importance of birth registration, and develops new ways in consultation with communities, to register births before children are named so that births are registered immediately while cultural practices of the community are respected.
- ✓ Ensures that all child residential care facilities operating in the State Party are licensed and regularly monitored to care for children.
- ✓ Renews its measures to reduce mother-to-child transmissions of HIV, including through raising awareness on the pre-natal care services offered in health facilities and encouraging women to attend for treatment
- ✓ Reduces dropout rates especially in secondary education by removing indirect costs,
- ✓ Fast-tracks the plans to integrate ECD into the Ministry of Education
- ✓ Amends the Labour Act to raise the minimum age of employment to the level of the age of completing compulsory education and the minimum age of employment in hazardous work to 18 years.
- ✓ considers reviewing its penal laws to incorporate caregiving responsibility as a factor during sentencing processes, and to incorporating alternative and non-custodial forms of sentence for caregivers of young children
- ✓ undertakes specific measures to address the prevalence of sexual violence in families, incorporates topics of gender-based violence in the school curriculum to empower children to spot and report sexual violence, and collects data on sexual violence to find out its root causes and undertake appropriate interventions
- ✓ ensures the enforcement of its laws prohibiting the sale of substances to children

V. PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

i. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN IN AFRICA

12. During the 43rd ordinary Session, the ACERWC held a Panel Discussion focusing on the theme of the year of the AU- the right to education. During the panel, presentations were made on the following topics:
- Roadmap on the Theme of year on Education: the presentation was made by the representative from Education Division of the Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation of the African Union Commission (AUC),
 - Concept Note of the Day of the African Child 2024 'Education for all: The time is now'- the presentation was made by the Secretariat of the ACERWC.
 - Draft General Comment on Article 11 of the Charter on the Right to Education,
 - Improving access to education by addressing child hunger; and
 - Children's reflection on priority areas for intervention.
13. The Committee notes that 'Education for all' is a concept which emanates from Article 11(1) of the Charter which states 'Every child shall have the right to an education'. From the presentations and the discussions, it is noted that despite the progresses made to ensure education for all children in Africa, the challenges persist. According to the Continental Report on Education in Africa, over half of Member States have adopted inclusive education policies in principle, yet, 20% of children between 6 and 11, 30% of children between 12 and 14, and 60% of children between 15 and 17 years are out of school in Africa. The figures indicate the high level of school dropouts which is caused by, among others, child poverty, gender-based discrimination, violence, conflict and crisis, displacement, sanitary facilities, teenage pregnancy, lack of SRHR services, exclusion of pregnant and married girls, harmful practices, and inaccessibility of schools. The exclusion of younger children due to lack of early childhood education was also noted. The Committee also stressed that malnutrition impacts education and that school meals can change that, hence, the need for sufficient food policies and services remains critical action.
14. Among the priorities as identified by the children's representatives are what they intend to obtain from schools which are to get education and acquire knowledge; to become more developed individuals; to learn the skills of reading, writing, and communication; build their confidence; learn values of honesty, dignity, respect, and love to their countries; develop talents; and get life skills to be able to face challenges. In their reflections, all the children raised the issue of children with disabilities and their exclusion from schools. The children highlighted that they notice children with disabilities being neglected and abused; and subjected to attend segregated schools which do not provide quality education. The children further highlighted some of the specific challenges that force children to dropout

such as joining cultural initiation schools which mainly affect boys, child marriage, financial crisis, house chores, gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment in schools, and abduction on the way to schools. Moreover, the children highlighted that schools lack safety and security, lack fences, and do not offer clean environment. They stressed the importance of providing food and first aid in schools, as well as addressing child labour, corporal punishment and providing rehabilitation support to children affected by drug abuse. The Children also reflected on the role parents and the need to inform families about their parental responsibilities to send their children to schools. Finally, they highlighted the importance of integrating modern teaching aids in schools.

15. The Committee notes, to ensure education for all children in Africa, there is a need for Member States to take legislative measures to ensure free and compulsory primary education and progressively free secondary education; provide early childhood development; regulate of private schools; ban all forms of barriers to access education; and ensure inclusive education.

ii. **THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN ON THE MOVE**

16. During the 43rd Ordinary Session, the Committee held a Panel Discussion on children on the move to take stock of the ACERWC's Mapping Study on Children on the Move within Africa, which was published in 2019. The Panel recognized the need for knowledge sharing among key stakeholders, Member States, CSOs, children and others, for effective and coordinated interventions. Presentations were made on child labor in the context of movement, systems strengthening for children on the move, detention of children in the context of movement, the plight of unaccompanied children on the move in Africa, and Children on the move and statelessness. After the deliberation, the Committee notes the following:

- Overall, in Africa as a whole, the number of children in child labour rose from 72.1 to 92.2 million in 2020. Taking this alarming development into consideration, and the worsening trends in protection of children on the move, the AUC launched a Consortium on Children-on-the-Move and Child Labour in the Kingdom of Lesotho on 12 April 2024. The Consortium is made up of the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) of the African Union Commission, ACERWC, IOM, ILO and UNICEF.
- There is a need to implement the African Union's Ten-Year Action Plan on Eradication of Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery in Africa (2020-2030), the AU Policy on the Prevention of the Trafficking in Persons in Africa 2022, AU Policy on the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants in Africa 2022, and AU Declaration on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers 2022.
- Systems strengthening for children on the move should focus on route-based interventions and strengthening national systems for child protection. The Committee also notes the importance of addressing the root causes through a comprehensive approach as part of strengthening the system through peacebuilding, poverty reduction and social safety nets; the need to have robust data collection systems to inform responses and program interventions; the need for stronger cross-border cooperation and information-

sharing mechanisms and the importance of investing in the capacity building of social workers, law enforcement, and border officials.

- The Committee also notes the challenges faced by children who migrate across borders without proper registration, rendering them stateless and often without basic human rights such as identity and citizenship. This situation places them at high risk of marginalization and vulnerability. The Committee notes the importance of establishing and maintaining effective and universal birth registration systems for all children as a foundational step in preventing and eliminating statelessness.

iii. CHILDREN IN CONFLICT SITUATION- EMERGING CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

17. During the 43rd Ordinary Session, the ACERWC has deliberated on matters related children in conflict situation focusing on emerging challenges and proposed solutions. The Committee notes the existence of a robust normative and institutional frameworks within the AU for protecting Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC). This includes article 22 of the African Children's Charter on armed conflicts, the General Comment adopted by the ACERWC on children in conflict situations, a model law, and various continental studies on the issue. The AU Policy on Mainstreaming Child Protection in The African Peace and Security Architecture, and the AU Policy on Child Protection in African Union Peace Support Operations. The AU Peace and Security Council has committed itself to continuous engagements with ACERWC, and with children themselves, in forging solutions to challenges of CAAC. However, the Committee notes that child protection during conflict requires a holistic approach that involves efforts from all actors across the board.

18. On the issue of children's access to social services during conflict, particularly education, the Committee notes that crises disproportionately affect children's education. It is also further noted that there is a need for psychosocial support for children who experience violence and creating child sensitive social programmes to ensure that children most affected by inequality and discrimination receive added protection. This includes girl children who face risks of pregnancies and child marriages, which could prevent them from returning to schools when conflict ends. This also includes boys who are recruited into fighting, who might face re-integration challenges after conflict ends.

iii. CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS- PROGRESS SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL COMMENT ON ARTICLE 30

19. During the 43rd Ordinary Session, the ACERWC has deliberated on matters related to children of incarcerated parents with a view to taking stock of the ACERWC's General Comment on Article 30 of the African Children's Charter. Article 30 of the Charter ensures the special treatment that should be accorded to expectant mothers and to mothers of infants and young children including prioritizing non-custodial sentences; providing alternatives to confinement; establishing alternatives institutions for such mothers; ensuring that no child is imprisoned with

a mother and no death sentence is passed on such mothers; and focusing on reformation and integration of incarcerated mothers. The key elements of the General Comment on 'special treatment' to incarcerated caregivers which entails a higher level of obligation by the State out of the ordinary measures; and non-custodial sentence requires review of the sentencing procedure to ensure that sentencing courts assess if an accused person is a primary caregiver, if the children will obtain appropriate treatment in detention if the sentence has to be custodial; and that their best interests is protected. Looking at the status of implementation of the General Comment, the Committee notes that 38 States submitted reports after the adoption of the General Comment out of which 24 States Parties reported specific legislative or policy provisions allowing children to stay with their imprisoned mothers up to a certain age. It was informed that Benin, Gabon, and South Africa reported legal frameworks that specifically prohibit the death sentence generally; Eritrea, Ghana, and Zambia reported specifically prohibiting it for pregnant women or mothers with young children; and Madagascar and Niger reported prohibiting it until pregnant women give birth. Ten States Parties have explicit legal provisions advocating for non-custodial sentences namely Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Eritrea, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Zambia. The Committee also notes that only 9 States Parties have established special institutions or units within prisons to cater specifically to the needs of incarcerated mothers which are Benin, Chad, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa. From countries reporting to the Committee, it is noted that only 4 States Parties namely Benin, Chad, Ethiopia, and South Africa presented data/numbers in their reports on the number of children incarcerated with their parents and caregivers. Additionally, only Botswana, Ghana reported on alternative care arrangements for children outside the prison system, suggesting a gap in comprehensive support services.

20. To enhance the implementation of Article 30 and the General Comment, Member States should work to provide legal protections to prioritize non-custodial sentences; listing non-custodial sentencing options in sentencing laws and regulations; ensuring the best interests of the child; banning death penalty of caregivers in law and practice; ensuring that children incarcerated with their mothers are not discriminated based on the status of their caregivers; adopting alternative care policies; and providing legislative and administrative procedures to ensure the rehabilitation of caregivers.

VI. DAY OF GENERAL DISCUSSION ON SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN WITH ALBINISM

21. During the 43rd Ordinary Session, the Committee organized a Day of General Discussion on the situations of children with albinism. The forum was organized in collaboration with the UN Independent Expert on People with Albinism. The Committee is cognizant of the unique challenges faced by children with albinism in Africa. The ACERWC notes specific rights and protections under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child for children with albinism, in particular, article 3 on non-discrimination; article 4 on the best-interests of the child; article 5 on the right to survival and development; article 11 on the right to education; article 14 on the right to health; and article 21 on the protection against

harmful, social, and cultural practices. The Committee emphasizes the urgent need for Member States to fully implement these provisions of the Charter, ensuring that children with albinism are afforded the protections and opportunities they rightfully deserve, free from discrimination and harm, and supported in their development, health, and education. In response to the multifaced challenges and rights violations faced by children with albinism, the Committee has undertaken various initiatives to promote and protect their rights. This includes conducting fact-finding missions in the United Republic of Tanzania (2015) and Republic of Malawi (2022), which further highlighted the challenges faced by children with albinism, including threats to their physical safety and lives due to rampant structural attacks, often with a view to trade in their body parts. Moreover, the right to education for these children is often compromised, leading to high dropout rates due to the lack of support like low-vision aids, including glasses and specialized computer equipment. Fear of attacks and abduction, alongside bullying and concerns over safety and health during long walks to school in the sun, exacerbates this issue, with some parents choosing to keep their children at home. Resolution No 19/2022 of the Committee's Working Group on the Rights of Children with Disabilities, adopted during the 39th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC, calls attention to the lack of adequate measures to improve the lives of children with albinism. This includes the need for more accessible and affordable healthcare, as well as the provision of protective gear like sunscreen and hats. The resolution also acknowledges the harmful social, cultural, and religious beliefs that fuel violence against these children. Despite previous recommendations, the persistence of discrimination and violence remains a concern, prompting the Committee to reiterate its call for stronger actions from Member States.

22. Cognizant of the above-mentioned initiatives, children with albinism face continued discrimination and stigma in their daily social interactions, largely due to their skin color and the widespread myths and harmful practices surrounding the condition of albinism in Africa. It was considering this, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child organized the Day of General Discussion on children with albinism.

23. The Committee recommends Member States of the AU to:

- Ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa and domesticate the African Union Plan of Action to End Attacks and Other Human Rights Violations Targeting Persons with Albinism in Africa (2021-2031) through the adoption of national action plans on albinism.
- Involve children with albinism and organisations of persons with albinism in the development of laws and policies related to them and strengthen the capacity of children with albinism to be self-advocates and advocate for their rights in their families and communities.
- In line with international human rights laws and standards, develop a specific national strategy to address the provision and access to free or affordable healthcare services, protective gear, sunscreens and assistive devices required by children with albinism.
- Ensure that there are legal provisions on inclusive education, and to protect and prevent the violation of the rights of children with albinism and respond to their psycho-social needs where they have experienced and are exposed to

harm, and further ensure perpetrators of attacks against children with albinism are brought to justice.

VII. FOLLOW-UP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

i. CONSULTATION WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACERWC'S CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS, 30 SEPTEMBER -01 OCTOBER 2024

24. The ACERWC held monitoring consultation with the Republic of Kenya to assess the level of implementation of its concluding observations and recommendations on the second periodic report of the State Party and its Decision on Communication No 002/com/002/2009 submitted on behalf of children of Nubian Descents. The Consultation was held on 30 September- 01 October 2024 in Maseru Lesotho in the presence of the Representatives of the Government of Kenya and the Delegation of the ACERWC. Engagements with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the State Party was also held. The Consultation aimed to identify progress and challenges in the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the Committee and sought to enhance and accelerate the implementation of its recommendations and to ensure that the reporting cycle was maintained. The Committee observed that the State Party has undertaken various measures to implement its recommendations and decisions.

25. Following the assessment, while appreciating the progress, the Committee recommends the Republic of Kenya to:

- ✓ Finalize and submit its third Periodic Report on the implementation of the Charter and the previous concluding observations and recommendations
- ✓ Accelerate the adoption of a new National Plan of Action for children, ensuring that it complies with the Charter and other international instruments concerning children.
- ✓ Collect and provide comprehensive disaggregated data on children on all aspects of the Charter
- ✓ Ensure that offices of the Department of Children's Services in all counties have sufficient financial resources, and adequately trained staff to be able to meet the needs of children with disabilities, especially in the rural areas
- ✓ Allocate sufficient and increased children's budget and increase the health budget allocation to meet the 15% Abuja target
- ✓ Finalize the review of the Witchcraft Act to ensure the criminalization and prosecution of harmful practices against children with albinism.
- ✓ Ensure that all police stations have Child Protection Units with adequate resources and trained staff on children's rights
- ✓ Ensure that legislation regarding nationality is consistent with the Charter and the Committee's ruling in Communication No 002/com/002/2009, to the effect that children can acquire nationality during childhood and not only when they turn 18
- ✓ Ensure that the birth registration and late registration fees are removed to achieve free and universal birth registration

- ✓ Investigate child rights violations that occurred in the 2017 elections and in the 2024 protests regarding the Finance Bill, and prosecute perpetrators with due diligence
- ✓ Implement the school re-entry policy and enhance monitoring, awareness-raising, public education, and provision of sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents
- ✓ Finalise and enforce the regulations regarding alternative care and adoption under the Children Act, ensuring that they are consistent with the Charter
- ✓ Review the minimum age of employment in line with international standards; adopt and enforce regulations under the Children Act regarding the terms and conditions under which children can perform work; enhance monitoring in hotspot areas and conduct awareness raising; and enhance social security measures for families in the arid and semi-arid regions
- ✓ Develop child-specific guidelines to regulate the running of shelters for survivors of sexual and gender based violence
- ✓ Undertake awareness-raising in collaboration with social institutions to tackle the prevalence of FGM and child marriage rates despite policy interventions.
- ✓ Finalise the guidelines for the care and protection of children of incarcerated parents, ensuring consistency the General Comment on article 30 on Children of incarcerated and imprisoned parents and primary caregivers.
- ✓ Undertake legislative, administrative and other measures to fully implement Communication No 002/com/002/2009, ensuring that children of Nubian descent are registered at birth; can attain nationality during childhood; and ensure that they are not discriminated in any manner when accessing public services.

ii. CONSULTATION WITH THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACERWC'S CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS, 30 SEPTEMBER -01 OCTOBER 2024

26. The ACERWC held monitoring consultation with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to assess the level of implementation of its concluding observations and recommendations on the second periodic report of the State Party and its Decision on Communication No. 007/Com/003/2015 on behalf of Said Ould Salem and Yarg Ould Salem. The Consultation was held on 30 September- 01 October 2024 in Maseru Lesotho in the presence of the Representatives of the Government of Mauritania and the Delegation of the ACERWC. The Consultation aimed to identify progress and challenges in the implementation so the recommendations and decisions of the Committee and sought to enhance and accelerate the implementation of its recommendations and to ensure that the reporting cycle was maintained. The Committee observed that the State Party has undertaken various measures to implement its recommendations and decisions.

27. Following the assessment, while appreciating the progress, the Committee recommended that the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to:

- ✓ Submit its first periodic report on the status of implementation of the Charter and the previous recommendations and decisions of the Committee

- ✓ Withdraw the reservations it made while ratifying the Charter
- ✓ Ensure the existence, collection and publication of disaggregated data on children in the country
- ✓ Increase the share of the national budget allocated to the implementation of the Charter
- ✓ Review its legal framework on children's rights in order to harmonize the age of recruitment into the army with the provisions of Article 22 of the Charter, which sets the age at 18 years
- ✓ Strengthen efforts to ensure food security and reduce malnutrition among children
- ✓ Review the selection criteria for child parliamentarians to make them more inclusive and ensure that all children, regardless of their academic performance, disability or other criteria, can exercise their right to participate in the children's parliament
- ✓ Conduct birth registration campaigns, with free birth registration and certification with simplified procedures for the issuance of civil status documents focusing on children in rural areas
- ✓ Integrate basic health education, including sexual and reproductive health, in the educational curriculum
- ✓ Take necessary measures to assess and address factors contributing to high school dropout among girls, including harmful practices, and ensure the continuity of schooling for pregnant girls
- ✓ Take legislative measures in terms of determining the length of time during which children can remain with their incarcerated mother, in order to reduce it in accordance with the best interests of the child and strive to ensure that once released from prison, the child benefits from adequate reintegration measures
- ✓ Take the necessary measures to respect and enforce the minimum age of marriage and to end child marriage and FGM
- ✓ To further research into the separation, abduction and trafficking of children, in connection with the phenomenon of slavery, and strengthen awareness-raising initiatives to promote behavior change within communities to encourage the abandonment of these practices
- ✓ Continue the implementation of the action plan to address family separation and finalize the national survey on children without family support to inform targeted intervention
- ✓ Continue the implementation of the action plan to combat trafficking in persons 2024-2026 and submit the results of its implementation in the next periodic report
- ✓ Accelerate the ongoing reform of specialized courts
- ✓ Strengthen measures to protect children living on the streets and ensure that these children have access to essential services, such as shelter, food, education, health care and protection from abuse, and
- ✓ Strengthen efforts to ensure that children removed from the streets receive rehabilitation and social reintegration services, as well as appropriate training to prevent them from returning to the streets.

VIII. CHILD RIGHTS FORUM ON THE AFRICAN CHILDREN'S CHARTER

28. The ACERWC organized a Child Rights Forum during its 44th Ordinary Session on 03-04 October 2024 in Maseru, Lesotho with a view to document the best practices on the implementation of the Charter and the Committee's recommendations as well as amplify voices of Member States and other stakeholders on their roles on implementation of the Charter. The Child Forum serves as a pre-consultation for the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the adoption of the Charter and 10th Anniversary of the synopsis of Agenda 2040 in 2025. Moreover, the Forum is timely and in line with the AU Human Rights Decade (2016-2026) which includes promotion of human rights as a key action plan. During the Forum, panels were held on the Monitoring Mandate of the ACERWC; Ensuring School Retention; Establishment of NHRIs with Child Rights Structures and Function; Violence Against Children and Harmful Practices; Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities of Children with Disabilities; Child Rights-Based Approach to Climate Action: With focus on Adaptation; National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up for the Implementation of the Decisions and Recommendations of the Committee; and Safeguarding Children's Rights in the Informal Business Sector in Africa.
29. During the Forum, the following recommendations were made on the various thematic areas:
- State Parties must increase their cooperation with the monitoring mandate of the Committee by submitting their reports in a timely and consistent manner, authorizing the Committee's request to undertake country visits, and providing timely Responses on Communications pending before the jurisdiction of the Committee. Moreover, the role of the Executive Council to exert pressure on state parties to implement decisions related to the promotion and protection of human rights was emphasized.
 - Reaffirming commitment to improve school retention by assessing vulnerabilities in education systems, implementing comprehensive programs to improve enrolment, passing, retention and completion rates; formulate education laws and policies that provide for retention and return of married and pregnant girls in schools; increasing budget allocation for education; building resilient education systems capable of withstanding conflict, emergencies, and climate change; banning corporal punishment in schools; integrating programs to address harmful practices and gender-based discrimination with education; expanding social security and safety net programs to support education; addressing the challenge of child labour; improving school infrastructure including access to sanitation and disability-friendly environments.
 - The establishment of permanent and functional child rights formal structures within NHRIs that has annual program and plans and allocated budget for activities was recommended. Moreover, it was highlighted that NHRIs should increase their engagement with the Committee by engaging its mandate and formalizing relationship through obtaining affiliate status. The role of NHRIs in promoting the implementation of ACERWC recommendations and decisions was amplified
 - Noting the prevalence of harmful practice such as child marriage and harmful practices, recommendations were made to adopt laws and policies on prohibiting the practices, implementing strategies to implement the laws,

collaboration among stakeholders to address the scourge, utilizing strategic litigation, and documenting survivors stories leveraging the role of the media.

- To address the discrimination of children with disabilities, it was recommended that Member States should enact stronger laws and policies on the protection of children with disabilities; establish inter-ministerial taskforces; raise awareness to address societal stigma; ensure that ensuring that children with disabilities are fully integrated into social, political, and cultural life; develop specialized education programs; and provide community based rehabilitation and integration services.
- Member States should take measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change on children by prioritizing climate adaptation efforts, which include integrating climate considerations into national development plans, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, and promoting climate education and awareness. In addition, the importance of supporting climate-resilient livelihoods through climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, and improved water management was highlighted; and climate financing on children's rights and prioritizing child-centered approaches were underlined.
- Structured national processes on compiling State reports and monitoring implementation can be achieved through the establishment of National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRFs) as they can address the common practical challenges States face in the coordination of reporting and follow-up. NMRFs should have four key capacities namely coordination, information management, consultation, and engagement capacity. Member States need to establish NMRFs, provide resources and budget, and ensure their coordination capacity.
- Noting that children engage in the informal sector due to poverty, lack of access to education, cultural norms, and political instability, it was recommended that Member States should improve access to quality education, change cultural and social norms that encourage child labor, strengthen laws and their enforcement against child exploitation, support vulnerable families. Businesses should adopt child-sensitive practices, including risk assessments and corporate social responsibility initiatives, while collaborating with NGOs to protect children.

IX. WORKSHOP WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECS) ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

30. The Committee held workshop with Regional Economic Communities on violence against children on 05 October 2024, mainly focusing on its Guidelines on Ending Violence Against Children and the role RECs play towards implementation of the Guidelines. The Guidelines aim to support AU Member States in addressing policy gaps, harmonizing efforts with continental and global targets, and establishing standards for child protection. It provides to Member States how to adopt clear laws to, National Action Plans, and National Prevention and Response Strategies for VAC. It also proposes guidance for institutional measures, strengthening data collection systems & approaches, monitoring mechanisms for preventing and addressing VAC, budgeting and resource mobilization for VAC as well as establishing National Child Helpline/Online mechanisms to respond to VAC. Representatives from Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD), Common

Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), and Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) shared the measures undertaken by their respective RECs to address violence against children and the role they could potentially have to ensure the popularization and implementation of the Guidelines on Ending Violence Against Children. The need to enhance collaboration between ACERWC and RECs was a key highlight of the Workshop.

X. COMMUNICATIONS

i. Implementation Hearing on Communication No: 0012/Com/001/2019 In The Matter Between The Legal And Human Rights Centre And The Centre For Reproductive Rights (On Behalf Of Tanzanian Girls) Against The United Republic Of Tanzania

31. The ACERWC held implementation hearing to monitor the implementation of its Decision on Communication No: 0012/Com/001/2019 in the matter *between the Legal and Human Rights Centre and the Centre for Reproductive Rights (on behalf of Tanzanian girls) against the United Republic of Tanzania* on 09 October 2024, during its 44th Ordinary Session. The Implementation hearing is held in line with Section XXI (1) of the ACERWC's Guidelines for Consideration of Communications and Monitoring Implementation of Decisions. In its Decision, the Committee finds the Respondent State in violation of its obligations under article 1 (obligation of states parties), article 3 (non- discrimination), article 4 (best interests of the child), Article 10 (protection of privacy) article 11 (education), Article 14 (health and health services), Article 16 (protection against child abuse and torture), and article 21 (protection against harmful social and cultural practices) in relation to the facts of the case relating to forced pregnancy testing in schools and the expulsion of pregnant and married girls from schools, among others. Accordingly, the Committee issued 14 recommendations, urging the respondent state to take to take the necessary measures to remedy the rights violated and protect the rights of the girls affected. During the implementation hearing, both parties provided information on the measures undertaken and challenges faced in the implementation of the Committee's Decision. The Committee commends the United Republic of Tanzania for participating in the implementation hearing and its robust measure to allow the return of girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy. Noting with appreciation the positive measures, the Committee issued guiding recommendations towards the full implementation of its Decision for the Government of Tanzania to:

- ✓ Ensure the timely amendment of the Education Act, Cap 353 and all relevant subsidiary acts, in line with the recommendations and with the overall rights and obligations under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- ✓ Ensure a clear, binding and explicit prohibition mandatory pregnancy testing in schools and health facilities, with established penalties for non-compliance
- ✓ Ensure that pregnant and married girls have the right to re-entry without restrictions or delays and remove the two-year re-entry limit; address expulsion grounds tied to wedlock

- ✓ Expand essential support services, such as psychosocial counseling and alternative education pathways, to ensure that girls returning to school after setbacks are not only welcomed back but also equipped for long-term success
- ✓ Strengthen child-friendly reporting and referral mechanism, with sufficient funding to support survivors of sexual violence, child marriage, and discrimination. Furthermore, equip police, healthcare, and school staff with clear guidelines to ensure compliance and prevent detention of pregnant girls
- ✓ Accelerate Efforts Against Child Marriage and Gender-based Violence Amend the Law of Marriage Act (1971) to eliminate legal provisions permitting child marriage, in alignment with court rulings
- ✓ Enhance the implementation of the recommendations in rural areas with targeted interventions and capacity building for stakeholders in rural communities
- ✓ Address stigma and expand sensitization efforts and in particular conduct regular sensitization programs for teachers, community leaders, and healthcare providers, focusing on non-discriminatory support for re-entering students and fostering an inclusive school environment. Ensure that re-entry options are available at all schools to reduce stigma
- ✓ Utilize gender transformative approaches in the sensitization and awareness creation endeavors to transform social norms towards the elimination of harmful practices that disproportionately affect girls with a focus on child marriage and gender-based violence, and
- ✓ Strengthen and continue partnerships with civil society organizations and local communities in sensitizing the public and overcoming barriers. Furthermore, take measures to expand SRHR education nationwide, ensuring teachers are properly trained and that the curriculum covers essential topics for all students.

ii. **PENDING COMMUNICATIONS**

32. During the reporting period, the Committee considered the following Communications and made decisions/rulings:

- i. Communication No: 0017/Com/001/2021 -Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network, Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Center for Human Rights (On Behalf of Children Affected by Witchcraft Accusations in Nigeria) against the Federal Republic of Nigeria- The Committee held hearing on the merits of the Communication during its 44th Ordinary Session in the presence of both parties, after which the Committee deliberated and decided to undertake an on-site investigation to the Federal Republic of Nigeria to assess the alleged facts on the ground. The Committee awaits the State Party authorize the mission.
- ii. Communication No: 0019/Com/001/2022- Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Mr. Solomon Joojo Cobbinah (on behalf of school-girls living in villages along the River Offin in the Ashanti Region of Ghana) against the Republic of Ghana- Following the request of the parties

- in the Communication, the Committee agreed to settle the Communication through an amicable settlement.
- iii. The Committee held hearing on the merits of Communication No: 0020/Com/002/2022-Lawyers Associated for Human Rights in Africa (LAHRA) (on behalf of Children of Jehovah's Witnesses) against the State of Eritrea- the Committee heard the Complainants during the 43rd Ordinary Session- The Committee decided to further investigate the matter and collect additional evidence on the allegations. The Committee awaits the authorisation of the State Party for an onsite investigation.
 - iv. 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- The Committee noted that the parties to the Communication failed to reach an amicable settlement and decided to request the Government of the Republic of Malawi to submit its arguments on merits and deliberate on the merits of the Communication during its 45th Ordinary Session.
 - v. Communication No: 0022/Com/004/2022-Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) against the Republic of Burundi- The Committee noted that the parties reached at an agreement on the terms of the amicable settlement, hence, decided to finalize the matter by adopting a report.

XI. DAY OF AFRICAN CHILD

i. COMMEMORATION OF DAC 2024

33. This year, the continental celebration of the Day of the African Child (DAC) on the theme '**Education for all Children in Africa: The time is now**' was held in Kiryandongo District, in the Republic of Uganda on 16 June 2024. As part of the commemoration, at the invitation of the Republic of Uganda Government, the Committee held Advocacy Meetings with Government Ministries, Parliamentarians and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on the theme of DAC on 13 and 14 June 2024. In addition, as part of the celebration of DAC, a Children's Symposium was organized on 15 June 2024 where over 250 children participated. The Committee applauds the Republic of Uganda for hosting the DAC 2024 and inviting the Committee to advocacy meetings.
34. Following the Commemoration of the DAC 2024 on 16 June 2024, an outcome statement was adopted by Children with a call to Member States of the AU to:
 - ✓ To allocate sufficient budget for education
 - ✓ Increase quality of education by training teachers,
 - ✓ Ensure that education is free and compulsory
 - ✓ Improve school safety and infrastructure e.g. classrooms, library, latrines
 - ✓ Promote peace and prioritize education
 - ✓ involve parents and communities supporting children's learning.
 - ✓ Providing mentorship programs for teachers
 - ✓ Embrace technology in Education sectors
 - ✓ Increase household income

- ✓ Increase budget allocations to school feeding programmes across African states.

35. The Committee encourages Member States to report on the commemoration of the DAC; and ensure that the commemoration of the DAC is constructive and innovative at the national level; and, during the commemoration, take all appropriate measures to involve all stakeholders in the realization of children's rights in the context of the theme of the DAC. Furthermore, the Committee encourages that efforts need to be in place to ensure that the activities and the agenda during the celebration of the DAC are made in child-friendly languages that make it easy for children to participate confidently and adequately in all matters that concern them.

36. Moreover, following its advocacy meeting with the Government of Uganda, the host of 2024 DAC, the Committee commends the measures undertaken by the State Party to provide education for all children in its territory. The Committee, while appreciating the positive strides, provided the below recommendations in line with the theme of the DAC for the State Party:

- To expedite the adoption and implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy to ensure equitable access to quality education for children with disabilities
- To address the impact of poverty leading to non-enrolment and high school dropouts by removing hidden costs like uniforms and examination fees through targeted subsidies to ensure all children can fully have access to education and participate in all school activities
- To expand the school feeding programs, particularly in marginalized areas,
- To improve access to education by building more schools, particularly in rural communities, and conducting awareness campaigns on the importance of education.
- To undertake measures to combat child marriage and teenage pregnancy through targeted interventions, such as enforcing stricter laws, providing sexual reproductive health education, and supporting community programs that emphasize the value of keeping girls in school.
- To strengthen the enforcement of existing laws prohibiting corporal punishment and addressing sexual abuse in schools by conducting regular inspections, ensuring accountability for violations, launching public awareness campaigns to shift cultural attitudes, and fostering safer, non-violent school environments,
- To work closely with various stakeholders on implementing comprehensive drug prevention and intervention programs in schools
- To address the challenge of teacher absenteeism by implementing strategies that encourage consistent attendance such as enhancing support for teachers, offering professional development opportunities, and creating incentive programs that recognize and reward regular attendance.
- To continue support for managing and integrating refugee children into the education system and
- To invest in Early Childhood Development (ECD).

ii. THEME OF THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD 2025

37. In line with the Executive Council Decision, the Committee notes that the Theme of the Day of the African Child for the year 2025 is ***'Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: Progress since 2010'***.

XII. ADOPTION OF THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE AFRICAN UNION

38. Reference is made to the Decision of the Executive Council requesting the ACERWC to develop a Child Safeguarding Policy for the African Union during its 42nd Ordinary Session, held on 15-16 February 2023, (EX.CL/Dec.1201(XLII)). The ACERWC, which according to Article 42(a)(ii) of the ACRWC is mandated to, inter alia, *'formulate and lay down principles and rules aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of children in Africa'*, has led the development of the Child Safeguarding Policy to regulate the AU's work so that children are not harmed, abused, or exploited when they come into contact with AU's staff members, associates, or its programs. The Policy reflects responsibility and accountability by the AU and its mechanisms, by proactively taking preventative and responsive measures that keep children (both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of its programs) in all their diversities, safe and protected. It 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, mental, or emotional abuse, neglect, maltreatment, sexual abuse, and exploitation. Where harm to a child has occurred, the Policy requires (for staff) or encourages (for communities) reporting to the AU, which is mandated to immediately respond in an adequate, effective, and efficient manner, upholding the victim/survivor-centered approach principles and ensuring the victim/survivor has access to relevant assistance as necessary.
39. The Policy was adopted by the ACERWC during its 43rd Ordinary Session. The ACERWC subsequently presented at the fifth Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labor and Employment of the African Union, which adopted the Policy and referred the matter to the Executive Council to commit for the operationalization of such Policy.

XIII. LETTER OF URGENT APPEAL TO THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE -25 OCTOBER 2024

40. The ACERWC sent a letter of Urgent Appeal to the Republic of Sierra Leone concerning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the Law in Sierra Leone. Acknowledging the efforts that the Republic of Sierra Leone has made in recent years to advance child protection, the Committee expressed its concern over the debates in the Parliament regarding the provision prohibiting female genital mutilation (FGM) in the Child Rights Act. The Committee noted that arguments raised in the Parliament of FGM as an integral to the communities' culture, and its prohibition in the Act could be perceived as an attack on traditional norms and the proposals to separate FGM from the Child Rights, could severely compromise the child protection efforts of the State Party. Through the letter, the ACERWC urged

the Republic of Sierra Leone to retain the provision explicitly prohibiting FGM in the Child Rights Act. The letter also urged the Government to uphold its obligations under the Charter, the Maputo Protocol, and other relevant standards such as the Joint General Comment on FGM.

XVII. ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUPS OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

Working Group of the ACERWC	Activities	Outcome/Recommendations to Member States
Working Group on Children's Rights and Business	Regular Meetings of the Working Group	<p>6th Working Group Meeting (13 April 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing was received from the Consortium on Children on the Move and Child Labor • The Consortium and the WG Members exchanged views and reflections on the implementation of the project proposal developed by the Consortium titled: Enhancing the protection of children in Vulnerable Populations: A continental response to combating child labor and to establish a programmatic response on children on the move in Africa • Presentation of the Resolution on the integration of a child rights-based approach in the implementation of the AfCFTA and the Resolution on the regulation of the informal business sector to ensure enhanced protection of children's rights • Presentation on the ToR for the Child Rights Due diligence guidelines in the agricultural sector, with sections allocated to WG members • Presentation and discussion of the activities for 2024, tasks assigned to Members of the WG <p>The meeting provided a platform for evaluating the Working Group's progress, accomplishments, and future direction. Discussions centred on fostering collaboration between the Working Group and the Consortium on Children on the Move and Child Labour, emphasizing the importance of a child rights-based approach. The meeting enhanced shared understanding on child labour and children on the move, setting the stage for joint activities to raise awareness and galvanize action on these issues.</p>

	<p>7th Working Group Meeting (30 September 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and Discussion on the policy brief on access to remedies for victims of corporate induced child rights violations • Discussion on the child rights due diligence guidelines in the agricultural sector • Presentation and discussion on status of activities and future activities • Briefing on the reflection session on safeguarding children's rights in the informal business sector <p>The meeting successfully assessed progress, reviewed accomplishments, and planned future activities. It facilitated discussions on key policy documents, including access to remedies for child rights violations and due diligence in the agricultural sector. The WG group also emphasized moving beyond policy development to practical outreach initiatives like webinars and partnerships.</p>
Statement on the World Safer Internet Day (February 2024)	<p>Recommendations to Member States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratify and domesticate relevant normative frameworks on protection of children online and set aside sufficient resources for the provision of ICT services, particularly in schools • Develop online child protection frameworks which tackle violation of children's rights online, including OCSEA, with a reporting and investigation mechanism and precise conditions and rules for extradition, extra territorial jurisdiction, mutual legal assistance, and the seizure and confiscation of goods • Address risks faced by children with disabilities through legislation and policies which ensure that the digital environment is safe for them. This includes countering the prejudices faced by children with disabilities that may lead to overprotection or exclusion • Provide safety information, protective strategies and public information, services and forums relating to the digital environment in accessible formats to

	<p>children with disabilities (where applicable) as well as their parents and caregivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create toll-free national emergency numbers that are always available for reporting online violations and for the provision of information on and referral to protection and support services for survivors • Establish by law the responsibility of ICT companies and financial institutions to protect children's rights online and hold businesses accountable for child rights violations online • Ensure the participation of children in decision-making processes using digital technologies presented in a child and disability-friendly format • Ensure that parents, caregivers and teachers are sufficiently equipped to assist children in safely navigating the digital environment • Initiate training for members of law enforcement and the judiciary to capacitate them to comprehensively address issues of child online protection.
Guidelines on developing policy briefs by the ACERWC	<p>The guidelines guide the Committee in developing effective policy briefs that can contribute to meaningful policy changes in children's rights and welfare in Africa. The guidelines will also facilitate collaboration for any partner organization tasked with developing policy briefs for submission to or with the ACERWC, adhering to a structured and clear format that can enhance the effectiveness of these documents.</p>
Resolution 20/2024 on the integration of a child rights-based approach in the implementation of the AfCFTA	<p>Recommendations to Member States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Child-Rights Impact Assessments: Include assessments in trade policy monitoring to identify risks and opportunities for children affected by trade practices. • Hold Businesses Accountable: Require enterprises to exercise due diligence in preventing and addressing adverse impacts on children and establish mechanisms for remediation. • Enhance Access to Services: Allocate resources for education, healthcare, social protection, and child-friendly justice

	<p>systems for children affected by trade-related activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Enforcement Measures: Implement robust mechanisms to prevent and address child labour, trafficking, abuse, and other forms of exploitation linked to trade. • Promote Collaboration and Regional Dialogue: Foster partnerships among governments, businesses, civil society, and international actors to integrate child rights into trade policies and share best practices. • Monitor and Report Progress: Regularly assess the impact of trade activities on children and report progress, challenges, and best practices to relevant stakeholders. • Raise Public Awareness: Conduct campaigns to educate the public on the importance of integrating child rights into trade practices. • Facilitate Regional Cooperation: Encourage dialogue among African nations to address cross-border challenges and improve child rights protection in trade initiatives.
Resolution 21/2024 on the regulation of the informal business sector to ensure enhanced protection of children's rights	<p>Recommendations to Member States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact laws to establish a clear minimum age of employment aligned with the end of compulsory primary education and prohibit child labour in both formal and informal sectors • Implement and enforce penalties for informal sector employers exploiting children in worst forms of child labor • Launch public awareness campaigns to educate employers and parents on the risks of child labour and emphasize the importance of education and child well-being • Address economic pressures driving child labour by enhancing national fiscal capacity, broadening tax bases, and investing in child-sensitive social protection programs • Ensure free, quality education for all children by removing barriers like school fees, transportation costs, and inadequate

infrastructure while supporting transitions to the workforce

- Regulate working conditions to protect children from hazardous work and economic exploitation that affects their education and well-being
- Establish child-friendly monitoring systems for informal businesses and judicial processes to report and address child labour violations effectively
- Collaborate with NGOs and civil society to train informal business operators on child safeguarding and ensure social protection policies reach families in informal economies
- Enhance economic policies to provide flexible credit, tax arrangements, and incentives for informal businesses complying with child labour laws
- Conduct research and gather data on the impact of the informal economy on children's rights and engage businesses on protection efforts
- Strengthen international and regional cooperation to share best practices, resources, and information on combating child labour
- Address the impact of the AfCFTA on children and ensure its benefits are equitably shared, including remedying abuses in informal transnational business operations
- Support children's participation and leadership in addressing child rights violations in the informal sector
- Promote employment conditions that support working parents and caregivers in fulfilling their responsibilities to children
- Establish well-resourced labour inspection and enforcement systems to aid recovery and reintegration of children affected by violence, neglect, or exploitation.
- Increase resources for criminal and justice systems to monitor and prosecute informal sector employers violating child rights
- Provide education and vocational training for children rescued from child labour in informal businesses

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate informal sector regulation efforts into State Party reports and establish mechanisms to monitor and report progress
	Statement on the world day against child labor (jointly developed with the Consortium on children on the move and child labor) 12 June 2024	<p>Recommendations to Member States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen and enforce child labour laws by rigorously implementing and upholding them across all sectors, including the informal sector • Increase investments in free, quality education and social protection programs to address the root causes of child labour, such as poverty and inequality • Address conflicts and crises, including those driven by climate change, to reduce forced migration and the vulnerability of children to labour exploitation • Promote synergies between efforts to eliminate child labour under Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other related SDGs targeting poverty, education, and decent work • Encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration by fostering partnerships between governments, international organizations, businesses, and civil society to share resources and strategies • Enhance data collection and monitoring systems to track progress in eradicating child labour, particularly in the informal sector, and to ensure accountability
	Reflection session on children's rights in the informal business sector (October 2024, during the 44 th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised Awareness of Child Labor in the Informal Business Sector • Identified and Discussed Barriers to Protecting Children's Rights in the Informal Sector • Developed Actionable Recommendations to Strengthen Child Protection Frameworks • Raised awareness on the resolution on the regulation of the informal business sector to ensure enhanced protection of children's rights • Increased visibility of the WG on children's rights and business
Working Group on Children's Rights	Regular Meetings of the Working Group	6th Working Group Meeting (12 April 2024)

<p>and Climate Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of draft resolution for the extension of the mandate of the Working Group and approval • Presentation of draft two-year work plan for the Working Group • Presentation of a draft concept note for a campaign entitled “1.1 Too High!”, advocating a child-rights-based approach to climate action in Africa. <p>7th Working Group Meeting (01 October 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of the two-year work plan due to resource constraints to undertake planned activities • Deliberation on planned Panel Discussion on Child Rights-Based Approach to Climate Action, with a Focus on Adaptation, for the Child Rights Forum conducted during the 44th Ordinary Session of the Committee; with participation of child climate justice advocates, civil society and inter-governmental actors.
<p>Briefing to the UNFCCC on the impacts of climate change on African children’s rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate a child-rights-based approach into all climate policies and actions, considering the specific risks faced by children and ensuring alignment with ACERWC Resolution No. 18/2022. • Prioritize adaptation efforts that protect children from adverse climate impacts and address loss and damage. This includes mechanisms supported by developed countries through increased finance and resources. • Ensure the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in climate actions, considering both immediate and long-term impacts. • Uphold principles from CRC General Comment No. 26 (2023) and the Maastricht Principles on Human Rights of Future Generations, recognizing the rights of children in both present and future contexts. • Provide significant increases in climate finance to Africa in the form of grants, not loans, prioritizing adaptation and

	<p>addressing loss and damage needs specific to children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and protect children's right to participate in climate action by creating spaces for civic engagement and effective involvement in decision-making processes at all levels. • Publicly acknowledge the role of African children as environmental human rights defenders and provide a safe and enabling environment for their activism. • Ensure meaningful participation of the most affected and marginalized children in climate-related decisions at local, national, and global levels.
Briefings to the OHCHR on the link between access to information and children's rights in the climate action context.	<p>Recommendation to Member States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States should collect and share detailed and disaggregated data on the impacts of climate change on children, including vulnerabilities and adaptation measures. • Develop legislative frameworks to ensure child-friendly, accessible information on climate change, addressing barriers such as language diversity and technological access. • Prioritize research on the specific impacts of climate change on marginalized groups, such as children with disabilities, those in extreme poverty, and displaced children. • Tailor climate action and adaptation strategies to meet the diverse needs of these groups. • Align national climate change policies with child-centered frameworks, such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). • Implement and enforce access to information laws, ensuring transparency and accountability from public and private entities. • Create platforms for children to engage in climate change discourse and decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels. • Facilitate funding and technical support to improve climate information systems and public awareness campaigns. • Align climate strategies with broader child-focused programs and policies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce regulations requiring businesses to disclose their climate-related risks and impacts on children's rights. • Obligate corporations to report measures they take to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and ensure effective remedies for business-related human rights violations. • Promote public education on climate change and children's rights through localized and inclusive initiatives, ensuring the participation of children in these efforts.
Factsheet on the impact of climate change on oceans and seas concerning children's rights, coinciding with the African Day on Oceans and Seas (July 25).	Factsheet that summarizes the connection between children's rights and the impact of climate change on oceans and seas in Africa. It calls for States protect children's rights from the negative impacts of climate change in the context its impact on oceans and seas.
panel discussion on a child-rights-based approach to climate action, focusing on adaptation, during the 44th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC.	<p>Report of the Panel discussion enclosed in the 44th Session Report of the ACERWC.</p> <p>The panelists called on Member States to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize of adaptation over mitigation in Africa • Develop of child sensitive National Adaptation Plans • Mobilize resources to finance climate action with a focus on adaptation • Ensure meaningful child participation in climate action
Statement of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child Working Group on Climate Change and Children's Rights on the Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security	<p>Recommendation to Member States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and implement laws, policies, programs, and other institutional measures to regulate the inclusion of additive substances in children's food, ensure access to adequate nutrition, and combat disease and malnutrition; • Develop climate change adaptation strategies that integrate nutrition, agriculture and food security, maternal and childcare and feeding practices, health, including environmental health and water and sanitation;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that children and their families in areas susceptible to food crises brought on by climate change are equipped to deal with the effects, by increasing national capacity for alternative feeding, micronutrients, and models for alternative, climate-adapted crops, sustainable food systems, anticipatory action, and shock-response systems, among other things; • Expand social security to areas affected by armed conflicts and climate change (including cash transfers) and hunger-relief programs; • Ensure climate information is accessible to affected communities and decision-makers, including children; and • Encourage subsistence farming, reduce or completely remove red-tapes in the food distribution chains at the all levels (national, regional and international) to ease the movement of food to communities most affected by food and nutrition insecurity.
	Legal Brief to the AUC OLC on state responsibility under the ACRWC in the context of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal brief outlining state responsibility under the ACRWC submitted to the AUC OLC and under consideration for incorporation in AUC's oral submission for the ICJ Advisory Opinion proceedings on climate change.
	Regular Meetings of the Working Group	<p>6th Working Group Meeting (13 April 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A briefing was provided by GIZ on the participation of the ACERWC in the Global Disability Summit (GDS) and the Africa Disability Summit. The outcome of the discussions was the Working Group's participation in the Africa Disability Summit, with ongoing deliberations on future engagement in the GDS. - Work Plan for 2023-2025 was adopted, with key tasks assigned to members. - Presentation on draft Policy Brief on education for children with disabilities by external expert, pending the submission of the written draft for further review. - Presentation on draft Guidance Note on assistive technology and devices, and the rights of children with disabilities in Africa.

Working Group on Children with Disabilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation on draft Resolution on harmful practices which has been adopted and published as Resolution 22/2024.
		<p>7th Working Group Meeting (01 October 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation on draft Guidance Note on reporting on rights and welfare of children with albinism, as adopted during 42nd Session. It was agreed to have a validation workshop, contingent upon partner support, which was held on 29 November 2024. - Revisit objective of Guidance Note on assistive technology and devices, and the rights of children with disabilities in Africa based on the content of the document
	Day of General Discussion on Solution to Challenges Faced by Children with Albinism in Africa (17 April 2024, during 43 rd Ordinary Session)	<p>Outcome Statement developed and recommendations to Member States include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa and domesticate the African Union Plan of Action to End Attacks and Other Human Rights Violations Targeting Persons with Albinism in Africa (2021-2031) through the adoption of national action plans on albinism - Involve children with albinism and organisations of persons with albinism in the development of laws and policies related to them, and strengthen the capacity of children with albinism to be self-advocates and advocate for their rights in their families and communities. - In line with international human rights laws and standards, develop a specific national strategy to address the provision and access to free or affordable healthcare services, protective gear, sunscreens and assistive devices require by children with albinism, - Ensure that there are legal provisions on inclusive education, and to protect an prevent the violation of the rights of children with albinism and respond to their psychosocial needs where they have experienced and are exposed to harm, and further ensure perpetrators of attacks against children with albinism are brought to justice
	Resolution 22/2024 on	Recommendations to MS:

harmful practices against children with disabilities in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratify and/or domesticate the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa and other international and regional child rights instruments, - Harmonize domestic laws, religious and cultural practices with international and regional standards prohibiting harmful practices and inter-sectional discrimination to protect children with disabilities; - Report to the ACERWC on measures to protect children with disabilities from harmful practices and track the implementation of ACERWC's Concluding Observations and Recommendations. - Collect accurate data on the prevalence of disabilities and improve birth registration rates to facilitate planning and intervention programs. - Conduct research, document harmful practices, and devise specific intervention programs with relevant ministries; - Establish and operationalize effective, autonomous, national institutional mechanisms with clear referral pathways to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of disability-related laws or policies; - Implement oversight mechanisms for traditional healers and communities, including defined rules and standards to prevent and remedy harmful traditional practices; - Create opportunities for the media to raise awareness of extreme forms of violence against children with disabilities, while partnering with the private sector, African Union agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders in the disability and child rights sectors to document and widely disseminate normative guidelines and good practices
Statement on International Day of Persons with Albinism	<p>Recommendations to MS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratify the Africa Disability Protocol and implement the AU Plan of Action (2021-2031) - Consolidate national data systems to gather reliable, disaggregated data on witchcraft accusations and ritual attacks against children with albinism and include relevant data in State Party reporting

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foster the full participation and integration of children with albinism into all aspects of society, including education, healthcare, and social services. - Enhance access to quality healthcare and education for children with albinism by providing reasonable accommodations such as protective gear— including sunscreen, hats, and glasses—and adapting classroom settings with larger fonts and accessible information to address visual impairments - Implement targeted awareness-raising initiatives to educate communities and institutions about albinism, dispelling myths and reducing stigma and discrimination - Strengthen intersectoral collaboration and capacity building among stakeholders to ensure a holistic and harmonized approach to addressing the challenges faced by children with albinism - Support efforts to prosecute perpetrators of attacks against children with albinism and provide psychosocial support to victims and survivors and their families.
	Statement on International Day of Persons with Disabilities	<p>Recommendations to MS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enact laws and policies that explicitly guarantee the participation of children with disabilities in decision-making processes consistent with the ACRWC - Establish child-friendly, inclusive, and accessible platforms and mechanisms that enable children with disabilities to express their opinions at all levels of decision-making - Guarantee the representation of children with disabilities in child participation platforms such as child parliaments, clubs, and other similar platforms - Ensure the accessibility of information in formats suitable for children with all types of disabilities to empower them to engage effectively in matters affecting their lives - Increase awareness raising efforts and discourage discriminatory attitudes by sensitizing communities, teachers, government officials and other stakeholders on the importance of participation of children with disabilities - Undertake the necessary measures to facilitate the active community participation of children with disabilities, including in the

		<p>context of play, recreation, and cultural and religious activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance the accessibility of education to children with disabilities by providing reasonable accommodation, training specialized teachers, and supplying accessible learning materials - Strengthen and update disaggregated data on children with disabilities by age, gender, type of disability, and other status to inform targeted interventions to support their participation based on their needs and evolving capacities.
Working Group on Implementation of Decisions and Recommendations	Regular Meetings of the Working Group	<p>5th Working Group Meeting- 12 April 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of draft two-year work plan for the Working Group - Presentation of the draft report on level of implementation of the Committee's Decisions. - Presentation of the first draft of the Guidelines on reparations under the ACERWC's Communications Procedure. - Deliberation by the Working Group on the inclusion of external experts - Presentation of the draft resolution for the extension of the mandate of the Working Group. <p>6th Working Group Meeting - 01 October 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Induction of new external experts and assignment of tasks. - Review of the 2024-2025 work plan to incorporate and revise activities - Review the draft Resolution on on "National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-Up". - Deliberation and task assignment in preparation for the experience-sharing panel on 'The Role of National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-Up in Strengthening the Implementation and Monitoring of Children's Rights' during the ACERWC Child Rights Forum.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the final draft of the ACERWC's Guidelines on Reparations
	<p>Resolution 23/2024 on "National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-Up"</p>	<p>Recommendations to MS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish NMIRFs through legislative framework, with a clear mandate and formal structure that includes follow-up the implementation of treaty obligations, and recommendations and decisions of the Committee; - Provide the necessary resources to NMRFs allocated through the national budget in accordance with each state's legal and administrative systems; - Ensure that the work of the NMRFs incorporates the participation of NHRIs, CSO's, and other state agencies involved in children's rights ; - Strengthen coordination efforts, transparency and public engagement to enhance existing national implementation-reporting systems, - Enhance the capacities and effectiveness of the NMIRFs through continuous trainings; - Ensure children, their representative organizations, and other key stakeholders are actively engaged and fully participate in the work of NMIRFs, - Encourage and facilitate close and strong engagement and collaboration between NMIRFs and the ACERWC, including through, regular reporting, and participation in follow-up activities and engagement platforms, and in that connection take appropriate measures to facilitate meetings between the Committee and the national mechanisms responsible for implementing recommendations whenever the Committee decides to conduct a follow-up mission on the implementation of its decisions or

		<p>concluding observations in the concerned Member States;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate engagement and interaction between the ACERWC Country Rapporteurs and NMIRFs to enable necessary communication and meetings with relevant persons and institutions in the State Party concerned; and if requested, to provide information and clarification on steps taken to implement the ACERWC's recommendations; - Designation of National Focal Points of Committee within NMRFs to deal with all matters related to monitoring and implementation of decisions and recommendations
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41. MATTERS OF HOST COUNTRY AND HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS AT THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ACERWC

42. Pursuant to the Decision of the Executive Council, EX.CL/Dec.1010 (XXXIII), where the Council Decides for the Kingdom of Lesotho to host the Secretariat of the ACERWC, the Secretariat of the ACERWC is now based in Maseru, the Kingdom of Lesotho. The Host Country has provided what is required under the Host Agreement to the Secretariat of the ACERWC. The ACERWC appreciates the support that the Host Country provides for the smooth operations of the Secretariat of the ACERWC. However, the ACERWC, notes that some elements of the host agreement, such as the construction of the permanent office premises is yet to be complied with by the Host Country.
43. For the Committee to effectively deliver on its mandate, it requires a professional, effective, capacitated, well-staffed and competent Secretariat. Due to the increasing visibility of the Committee, the ACERWC is now receiving more State Party Reports. The need to strengthen the Secretariat in terms of financial, human, and material resources, is very critical. It was with due recognition of this fact that the Assembly approved the revised structures of the Secretariat of the ACERWC (Assembly/AU/Dec.750 (XXXIII)). In this regard, considering the urgent needs of the Office, the ACERWC requested to recruit regular and short-term staff. Noting the heavy workload, resulting in a considerable delay in the recruitment of staff at the headquarters, the ACERWC pleads with the Executive Council to have a delegated power of recruiting its staff, which would also go in line with its autonomous nature as it applies with other Organs. In this regard, the ACERWC refers to the Decision of the Executive Council (EX.CL/DEC 1248 (XLIV)) requesting the Commission to expedite the finalisation recruitment of the ACERWC Secretariat's staff and provide guidance on the possibility of allowing the ACERWC to recruit its own staff. Considering the Office is newly established in Maseru, the

ACERWC request such consideration to be taken in addressing the financial, human and property needs of the Secretariat.

ITEM 12: RECOMMENDATIONS

44. In conclusion, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child would like to draw the attention of the Executive Council on the following issues:

- ✓ To congratulate the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic for ratifying the African Children's Charter and encourage the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Somalia, the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Tunisia, which have not yet ratified the African Children's Charter to expedite the ratification of the Charter.
- ✓ To congratulate State Parties which have submitted their reports on the implementation of the African Children's Charter and urge State Parties, which have not yet reported to the Committee to comply with their reporting obligations.
- ✓ To appreciate Member States for the measures they have undertaken in commemorating the Day of the African Child for the Year 2024 on the theme- "The Right to Education for All Children in Africa-the Time is Now" and encourage Member States to implement the recommendations of the Committee and report on the same.
- ✓ To appreciate the Republic of Kenya and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for the measures they have undertaken in implementing the recommendations of the Committee and encourage the same to fully comply with the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the ACERWC.
- ✓ To reiterate the Decision of the Executive Council on the Theme of the Day of the Day of the African Child to be on '**Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: Progress since 2010**'.
- ✓ To appreciate the Republics of Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Zambia and Namibia for submitting their periodic reports to the ACERWC and encourage the State Parties implement the recommendations of the Committee.
- ✓ To encourage Member States to take all measures to ensure education for all children in Africa, including legislative measures to ensure free and compulsory primary education and progressively free secondary education; provide early childhood development; regulate of private schools; ban all forms of barriers to access education; and ensure inclusive education.
- ✓ Encourage the concerned Member States to implement the recommendations of the ACERWC from the 2019 study on 'Mapping children on the move within Africa'.
- ✓ To urge the concerned Member States to address the plights of children in conflict situation.
- ✓ To encourage Member States to address the challenges of children incarcerated with their parents and caregivers and enhance the implementation of Article 30 and the General Comment by providing legal protections to prioritize non-custodial sentences.

- ✓ With a view to addressing the challenges of the children with albinism, encourage Member States to consider ratifying the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa and domesticate the African Union Plan of Action to End Attacks and Other Human Rights Violations Targeting Persons with Albinism in Africa (2021-2031) through the adoption of national action plans on albinism; Involve children with albinism and organisations of persons with albinism in the development of laws and policies related to them and strengthen the capacity of children with albinism to be self-advocates and advocate for their rights in their families and communities; in line with international human rights laws and standards, develop a specific national strategy to address the provision and access to free or affordable healthcare services, protective gear, sunscreens and assistive devices required by children with albinism; and ensure that there are legal provisions on inclusive education, and to protect and prevent the violation of the rights of children with albinism and respond to their psychosocial needs where they have experienced and are exposed to harm, and further ensure perpetrators of attacks against children with albinism are brought to justice.
- ✓ Encourage Member States to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of the adoption of the African Children's Charter and collaborate with the ACERWC on the same.
- ✓ Appreciate the United Republic of Tanzania for the measure it has undertaken to implement the recommendations of the ACERWC in the context of Communication No: 0012/Com/001/2019 in the matter *between the Legal and Human Rights Centre and the Centre for Reproductive Rights (on behalf of Tanzanian girls) against the United Republic of Tanzania*. Encourage the State Party to continue implementing the recommendations.
- ✓ To encourage the Federal Democratic Republic of Nigeria, the State of Eritrea, the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Malawi, and the Republic of Burundi to continue cooperating with the ACERWC in the context of the pending Communications.
- ✓ To reiterate the Decision of the Executive Council during its 42nd Ordinary Session, held on 15-16 February 2023, (EX.CL/Dec.1201(XLII)) and adopt the 'Child Safeguarding Policy of the African Union' and request the AUC to operationalize and implement the policy in collaboration with the ACERWC.
- ✓ To encourage the Republic of Sierra Leone to implement the recommendations of the ACERWC by retaining the provision explicitly prohibiting FGM in the Child Rights Act, and uphold its obligations under the Charter, the Maputo Protocol, and other relevant standards such as the Joint General Comment on FGM.
- ✓ To welcome the activities undertaken, resolutions, studies and standards developed by the Working Groups of the ACERWC, and encourage Member States to make use of such mechanism within the ACERWC.
- ✓ Congratulate the Kingdom of Lesotho for ensuring the smooth operations of the Secretariat of the ACERWC; and encourage the host country to continue providing the required pursuant to the host agreement, including the timely construction of the permanent office premises.
- ✓ Reiterate to the Decision of the Executive Council (EX.CL/DEC 1248 (XLIV)) requesting the Commission to expedite the finalisation recruitment of the

ACERWC Secretariat's staff and provide guidance on the possibility of allowing the ACERWC to recruit its own staff.

