



OPENING REMARKS BY HON. WILSON ADÃO
DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD COMMEMORATION
16 JUNE 2025
LILONGWE, MALAWI

- His Excellency, the Right Honourable Dr. Micheal Biziwick Usi, Vice President of the Republic of Malawi;
- Honorable Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Hon. Jean Muonaowauza Sendeza;
- Distinguished representatives of the Government of Malawi;
- Representatives of the African Union Commission;
- Honorable Members of the African Children’s Committee;
- Representatives of the United Nations, international organizations and development partners;
- Representatives of Civil Society Organizations;
- Dear children;
- Colleagues from the ACERWC Secretariat;
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls

On behalf of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, it is a great honor for me to deliver these remarks at the Commemoration of the Day of the African Child 2025, under the theme: Planning and Budgeting for Children’s Rights: Progress since 2010.

First of all, I would like to sincerely thank the Government of the Republic of Malawi for hosting this year’s commemoration. We are grateful for your strong support in organizing these events and making sure that everything has run smoothly. Your commitment to children’s rights is clear, and we thank you for welcoming us so warmly.

I also want to warmly welcome the children who have traveled from different countries and those that have traveled from different parts of Malawi to be part of this important gathering. Your presence shows that children are not only here to be listened to, but are full participants in the work we do. I also thank our partners who worked hard to make sure children could take part meaningfully in this event.

Distinguished guests, dear children,

This year's theme takes us back to a conversation we started fifteen years ago in 2010, when the focus was on Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: A Collective Responsibility. Now, we are looking back to see what has been done since then, what has changed, and what still needs to be done to make sure children are at the center of national plans and budgets.

We have seen progress in many areas. Many governments have made new national plans and policies that include children's rights. More children are able to attend school, visit health centers, and benefit from programs like school feeding and child support grants. Many governments are also starting to create spaces where children can share their views.

At the same time, we must admit that serious challenges remain. In many countries, not enough money is set aside for children. In some places, even when funds are planned for children, they are not always fully used or spent correctly. Many children, especially those living in poverty, rural areas, conflict zones, or who have disabilities, continue to face huge barriers to enjoying their rights. On top of this, new challenges like climate change, conflicts, displacement, and risks from the digital world are creating more risks for children that require better planning and budgeting.

Distinguished guests, dear children,

We have gathered here not just to talk about these challenges, but to remind

ourselves that every child in Africa has a right to receive the services, protection, and opportunities they need to survive, grow, and succeed. Planning and budgeting for children is a duty that governments have under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Planning and budgeting for children means making sure that enough money is raised and spent fairly, openly, and in a way that brings real change to children's lives. It means using good information to know where the needs are, and making sure that all children benefit, whether they are boys or girls, rich or poor, or with disabilities. And importantly, it means giving children a real chance to share their views and ideas.

Distinguished guests, dear children,

Before today's commemoration, children participated in a two-day training here in Malawi. The training helped prepare them to take part in the discussions we are having today. During these sessions, they learned about the African Children's Charter, the role of the African Children's Committee, and what governments must do to protect children's rights. They also learned about how governments plan and manage budgets, and why it is important for children to have a say in how these decisions are made.

At the end of the training, the children worked together to draft an outcome statement. This statement brings together the views, priorities, and recommendations from the children themselves. Later today, the children will present their statement to all of us. It is an important reminder that children understand their own lives and have valuable ideas that must be heard.

Distinguished guests, dear children,

Today's program includes many activities that give both children and adults the chance to listen, learn, and share. Among other things, we will hear from the Government of Malawi about their experience in planning and budgeting

for children. We will have a dialogue where children, government officials, AU representatives, development partners and civil society will sit together to discuss how we can do better for children.

Children will also lead a special panel to share their thoughts on how governments can better include children's voices in planning and budgeting. And finally, the children will present their outcome statement, which will serve as an important reminder to all of us of the work that remains ahead.

Let us all listen carefully to the voices and ideas that will be shared today by the children, by government, and by all partners. And let us leave this room with a renewed commitment to take real action in our own countries and institutions to put children at the center of our plans, policies, and budgets.

Distinguished guests, dear children,

The African Children's Committee remains fully committed to working with governments, partners, civil society organizations, and especially children, to promote and protect the rights of every child in Africa. We believe that real change happens when everyone works together, listens to children, and takes real steps to turn promises into action.

As we mark the Day of the African Child 2025, let us remind ourselves that investing in children today is investing in Africa's future. Let us make sure that every law, every policy, and every budget truly puts children first. Together, we can build an Africa where every child's rights are respected, every child's voice is heard, and every child has the chance to reach their full potential.

With these remarks, I thank you. Zikomo!